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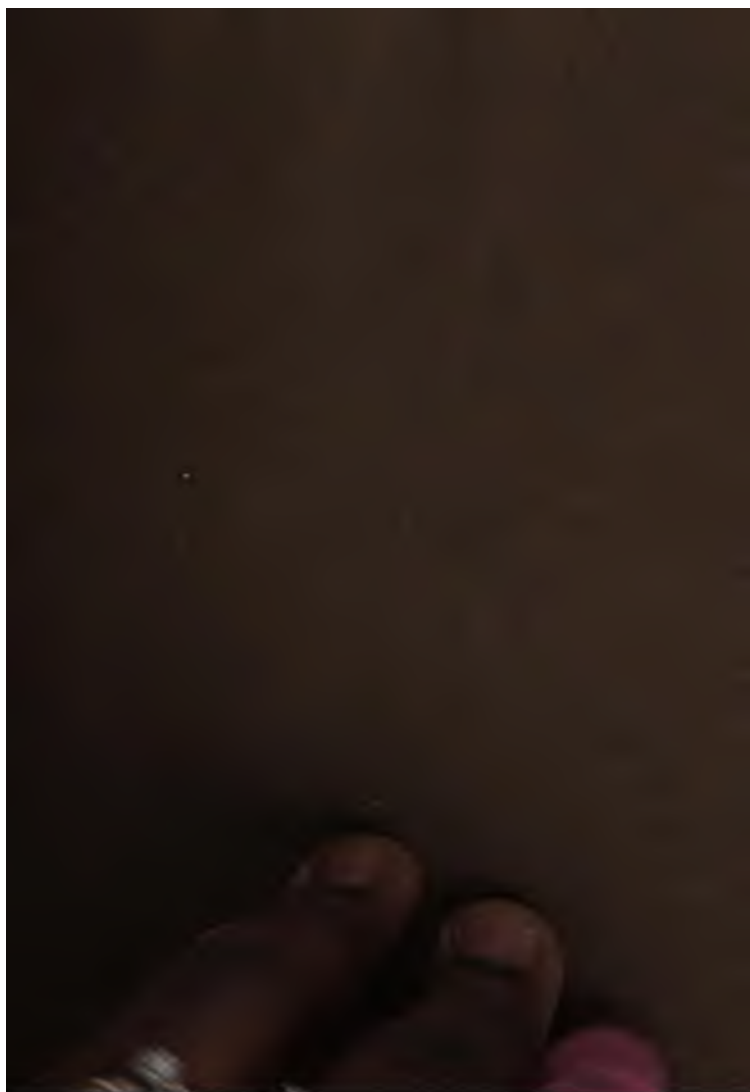
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*Edward Duke.*







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A  
COLLECTION  
OF  
TRACTS,  
ON  
VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

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Written by *THOMAS CHUBB.*

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The SECOND EDITION.

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VOL. II.

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L O N D O N .

*Printed for T. Cox, under the Royal-Exchange.*

M,DCC,LIV.





COLLECTION  
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VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

BY THOMAS HAYES.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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THE



T R A C T   X I X ,  
T H E  
C A S E of *ABRAHAM*,  
W I T H

Regard to his offering up *Isaac* in sacrifice, re-examined.

In a Letter to a Clergyman,

Reverend S I R,

\* \* \* H E N I had the happiness of being  
\* W \* in your company some few days past,  
\* \* \* you was pleased to query, whether  
\* \* \* what I have formerly said, in a discourse concerning *property*, with respect to *Abraham's offering up Isaac in sacrifice*, did not *clash* with what I have lately said upon that point, in the *supplement* to my *previous question*? This query has given me occasion to *re-examine* the subject, the result of which I beg leave to lay before you in the following observations. And,

*First*, I here take for granted (as being already elsewhere proved) the following proposition, *namely*, that *God is absolutely wise and good*; that is to say, God always (without the least variation) conducts his actions by the rules of wisdom and

*goodness*; or, in other words; he always does that which upon the whole is *best*, or most subservient to the common good. And therefore if I have at any time past advanced, or endeavoured to maintain any propositions which are *inconsistent* with the above proposition, all such propositions I now retract as *erroneous*. I thought it proper to make this remark, in order to prevent all objections of this kind. For, supposing that at different times I should advance two propositions *inconsistent* with each other, all I think, that would follow from hence is, that my judgment of the same point has been *different at different times*; which surely is a common case with those men whose opinions are the result of a free enquiry, and are not taken upon trust. I say, this is all that will follow, supposing the case as above; for, as to the propositions themselves, their *truth* or *falsehood* does not depend upon my advancing them, but upon the *strength* or *weakness* of the evidence which attends them. Again, I observe,

*Secondly*, That *Abraham* stood to *Isaac* in the relation of a *father*, that is, he voluntarily became the instrument of bringing *Isaac* into being; and from hence he became naturally obliged to *guard* and *protect* that life, which he had, by a voluntarily act, been the instrument of introducing. For, as life to *Isaac* was a *natural good*, so it must be right and fit that every person, but more especially he who *introduced* it, should guard and secure that good to him, provided *Isaac* did nothing to *forfeit* his title to life, and consequently his title to that protection; and whilst no *circumstance* attended his case, which might render his life *injurious* to the common happiness, or any other way render it *fit* that he should die. This I take to be a self-evident proposition. By natural obligation, I mean that it was *right* and *fit*, in the nature



ture of the thing, that *Abraham* should guard and protect the life of *Isaac*, as aforesaid. Which obligation as it is founded in nature, so it is *independent* of, and *antecedent* to any divine command; yea, it is antecedent to the *consideration* of a *Deity*, because it must and would be the same, if there were no such a thing as a *Deity*. Now if this be the case, then I think it will unavoidably follow, that no *subsequent divine command* could possibly *cancel* or take off the aforesaid natural obligation; it being a manifest absurdity, and a contradiction in terms, to say, that a natural obligation *arises from*, or his *destroyed by* a divine command; for if it depends upon a divine command, then it is not a natural in the sense I here use that term. And, if the divine command could not make void the natural obligation which *Abraham* was under, then, I think, it will follow, that the *giving* such a command, with an intent that it should be obeyed, must be *wrong*; and consequently, that *obedience* to such a command must be wrong also. But God did not intend that the command given to *Abraham* should be obeyed, as is evident by his recalling it. This I take to be the state of the case. Again, I observe,

*Thirdly*, That as *life* is a *natural good*, as it renders us capable of tasting those pleasures, which the present state of things has furnished us with; so consequently, *death* is a *natural evil*, whilst we are capable of those pleasures. Now, if this be the case, as most certainly it is, then it will follow, that the taking away of life, *causelessly*, is, in the nature of the thing, *morally unfit*; because it is a bar to the enjoyments of life; and therefore, if *Abraham* had not been obliged to guard and protect the life of his son, yet it would have been unfit that he should take it away. And if such an action would, in the nature of the thing, have



been morally unfit, then no *divine command* can possibly change its nature, and make it otherwise.

If it should be urged, that God has *originally a property* in all his creatures, and as he gives life to them, so it must be right and fit that he should take it from them, *when and in what way* he pleases : I answer, first, what was fit for God to do, and what was fit for *Abraham* to do, are plainly two distinct questions or cases. *God's relation*, and *Abraham's relation* to *Isaac*, are here supposed to be different ; which relation is likewise supposed to be the ground of the fitness or unfitness of their actions, in either case. And therefore supposing *God's* having a *property* in *Isaac* render'd it fit that he should take away *Isaac's* life, when and in what way he pleased ; yet it will not follow, that it was fit that *Abraham* should do the like, seeing it is not here supposed that *Abraham* had any such property in *Isaac*, as aforesaid.

If it should be said, that tho' *Abraham* had no right to take away *Isaac's* life, upon the account of property ; yet it was fit that he should do it, when under a *divine command*, seeing he who gave the command had a property in *Isaac*, as aforesaid : I answer, if *Abraham* had not been under a *natural obligation* to guard and protect the life of his son, antecedent to the divine command ; and, if life had not been a *natural good*, and the taking it away, causelessly a *moral evil*, antecedent to that command, then there might have been some reason to insist, that it was fit for *Abraham* to take away *Isaac's* life, when commanded, as aforesaid. But this is not the case ; for as *Abraham* became obliged, by his relation to *Isaac*, to guard and protect his life, antecedent to any divine command ; and, as the taking away of life, causelessly, was, in the nature of the thing, morally unfit ; so *God's property* in *Isaac* could not possibly make  
void

void *Abraham's* obligations, nor *change* the nature of things, by making that action fit, which, in the nature of the thing, is otherwise. Again,

I answer, *secondly*, that property in any subject does not *lessen* or *destroy* the natural obligations of the proprietor; and therefore it must be right and fit for him either to *exert* or *suspend* his power with regard to that subject, when the circumstances of the case render it *fit* and *proper* so to do. Thus my *ability* to convey my mind to another, by words, is my *natural property*; and yet I am obliged, in the nature of the thing, either to *exert* or *suspend* the exercise of that power, as the *circumstances* of the case render it *fit* and *proper* that I should speak my mind, or be silent. In like manner, if by my labour and industry I acquire a *property* in a *plentiful estate*, my property in that estate would not lessen or take off the natural obligations I am under to promote the *happiness* and *well-being* of the rest of my fellow-creatures; and therefore it would be fit that I should use and employ the *estate* which I had thus acquir'd a property in, to promote the common happiness, as aforesaid. The case is the same with respect to every kind of property, whether it be *original*, *natural*, or *acquired*. But, that I may give a case more directly to the present purpose, I will suppose that God had called a creature into being, and had given it a constitution which might run out to the age of sixty years in a *state of happiness*; and that he had likewise made a plentiful provision of all things, *necessary* and *conducive* to that happiness; now the question is, whether it would be right and fit, in the nature of the thing, for God, from *mere sovereign pleasure*, to cut off that creature in the midst of his days, when no ill consequence nor inconvenience attended that creature's enjoyment of life, And the answer to this question is

most evident, *namely*, that such an action, in the nature of the thing, would be *morally unfit*, seeing it would be a *barring* that creature of *thirty years felicity*; for as the letting such a creature live out its time would be an instance of *wisdom* and *true goodness*; so the taking life from it would be a manifest instance of the *contrary*. And, to say in this case, that God had a *property* in that creature, would be to urge what does not alter the case at all.

If it should be farther urged, that it is equally as fit for God *directly* and *immediately* to take away such a creature's life, as it is for him to do it by an *earthquake*, or a *tempest*, or the like: I answer, this is putting a case which is not to be admitted, because, in strictness, *God does not take away* the life of those creatures who die by earthquakes, &c. death, in these cases, being an *accidental evil*, which arises from the natural frame and constitution of the world; and which could not be prevented, in the present state of things, but by breaking in upon those *laws* by which the natural world is governed.

If it should be urged, that *God* could have recompensed the loss of life to *Isaac* an hundred-fold in another world, or he could have *raised him* again from the *dead*, and placed him in a much better state than he was in before, and that in these cases *Isaac* would have been no further a sufferer than barely the *pain* he felt in dying by the hand of his father; so that upon the whole, death would have been a *benefit* to him, and consequently, it would have been an instance of *divine goodness* in taking life from him: I answer, supposing God should at any time (as an instance of his sovereign pleasure) take away the life of *any of his creatures*, and then *recompense* that loss to them, as aforesaid; yet this would not affect the

the case with respect to *Abraham*, whose relation and obligations to *Isaac* would be still the same. And therefore supposing it be admitted, that God might, if he pleased, have taken away the life of *Isaac*, as aforesaid; yet it was *most unfit* that he should do it by the hand of *Abraham*. God may, if he pleases, use various ways of calling men out of this world; he could, by an *immediate operation*, or an exerting of his power, have so *stagnated* the blood and fluids in *Isaac's* body, or thrown them into such a *rapid motion*; or taken a variety of other methods, that would effectually and speedily have put on end to *Isaac's* life; and therefore for him to require *Abraham* to kill his son, which action in *Abraham* (supposing the case to be as I have stated it above, and which I think is the present case) would have been a breaking thro' an *obligation* that no divine command could possibly *cancel* or make *void*; which would have been a very bad *precedent* to others, and have reflected *great dishonour* upon the *moral character* of him who required it. All these reasons, I think, make it perfectly *unfit* that *Isaac* should die by the hand of his *father*; and, consequently, that God should *give* such a command with an intent that it should be obeyed; or that *Abraham* should yield obedience to it.

I am sensible that it is some men's opinion, that if God had commanded *Abraham* to *hate* his son, such a command would, in the nature of the thing, have been *morally unfit*; and yet those men insist, that it was *right* and *fit* for God to require *Abraham* to take away *Isaac's* life. This makes it necessary to enquire; what it is which renders the passion of hatred *vicious*; and, consequently, what it is that would render such a command *unfit*. And here I presume it will be admitted, that the viciousness of hatred consists in



its being indulged beyond its due bounds, or in its being exercised upon a wrong object; and that therefore it would have been wrong in Abraham to hate that object, which, in the nature of the thing, he ought to love. Now, if this be the case with respect to our passions, then, I think, it must be the same with respect to our actions, that is, it would have been equally as wrong for Abraham to take away that life, which, in the nature of the thing, he ought to preserve, as it would have been for him to hate that person whom he ought to love. Again, I observe,

Fourthly, That I think Abraham could not, in the nature of the thing, have any rational satisfaction that the aforesaid command was divine. For, supposing he received information, in the present case, either by a strong impression upon his own mind, or by a dream, or a vision, or a voice from heaven, or by the report of a person whom he esteemed an angel, or the like; as he could not be absolutely certain that he might not be deluded, nor imposed upon in any of these ways; so, in the nature of the thing, the moral unsuitness of the action (as in the present case it must appear to be) was a stronger reason against the divinity of that command, than any of those extraordinary ways in which that command was convey'd to him could possibly be for it.

If it should be urged, supposing that Abraham received his information in the present case, in the same way in which he had received several divine revelations before; and supposing this revelation had been backed with a miracle, or miracles, in like manner as the former divine revelations had been confirmed or proved to him to be such; in this case, surely, there would have been a just and rational foundation for him to conclude that the command was divine. I answer, admitting  
this

this to be the case, then I think that *Abraham* would have been *more liable* to be deluded or imposed upon, than otherwise he might have been. But it would by no means *justify* in argument, or render such a conclusion *rational*, viz. that the afore-said commandment was divine. For,

*First*, Supposing that *Abraham* had before received divine revelations in or by *dreams* a hundred times; yet surely it will not follow, by a just consequence, that he could not be *mis-led* by *dreaming*; but, on the contrary, he became so much the more in *danger* of being *deluded*. In this way his receiving *frequently* divine revelations, by dreams, might render him the *less* upon his *guard*, and he might hereby be more easily led to think, that *every dream* was a *divine revelation*. The case is the same in any other way in which he might receive his informations; his not being imposed upon, in *many* instances, is not a good argument to prove that he was not, or could not be imposed upon in the same way in *one*; because the latter will not follow by a just consequence from the former. Again,

*Secondly*, Supposing that the command for *Abraham*, to kill his son, had been backed with a *miracle*, or *miracles*, in like manner as several divine revelations had before been confirmed or proved to him to be such; yet this does not prove the fore-mention'd command to be divine. Miracles are directly and immediately evidences only of the *power*, and not of the *veracity* or *goodness* of the agent that performs them. So that when any thing farther is to be concluded from them, that conclusion must arise from the *purposes*, that the power which is shewn by those miracles is made subservient to. And therefore as *Abraham* justly concluded, that those former *revelations* backed with miracles were divine, be-  
cause



cause the purposes were good which those revelations and that power were made subservient to; so by a like way of reasoning it would follow, that there was a *strong probability* that the command, in the present case, was not divine, because this revelation, and the miracle wrought in its favour, were (to appearance at least, and as far as he could judge) made subservient, not to a good, but to an *evil purpose*.

If it should be urged, that what I have said seems to be contrary to what is said of *Abraham*, and contrary to the commendation given of him both in the *Old and New Testament*. I answer, what is said of *Abraham* in the present case is as follows. *Gen. xxii. 16, 17, 18.* *Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the Heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore. And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice.* *Heb. xi. 17, 18, 19.* *By faith Abraham when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son; of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called; accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure.* *James ii. 21, 22, 23.* *Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works, when he had offered up Isaac his son, upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God.* This, I think, is all that is said in the Bible, with regard to the point in hand; from all which it evidently appears, that *Abraham's* first trust and confidence

confidence in God, that he would make good his promise to him, and his strict honesty and integrity, which were shewn by his steady resolution to do what he judged to be his duty in such a trying instance; these alone are what *Abraham* stands in the *Bible* so highly commended for, and which are made the ground of God's extraordinary favours to him. As to the goodness of *Abraham's* judgment, or the justness of his reasoning, the *Bible* takes no notice of it; neither does it once meddle with those questions, viz. whether *Abraham* had or had not any rational satisfaction that the command was divine, or whether the action was fit or unfit; but leaves them to be discovered from the nature of the subject. But to conclude, I observe,

Fifthly, and lastly, What great difficulties men are thrown into, in order to excuse and justify the conduct of Almighty God, and of his servant *Abraham*, in the case I have been considering. Men's inventions have been put upon the wrack, in order to find out ways to reconcile the divine command with the principles of morality; and they have been led almost to give up the natural distinction of good and evil, and to resolve it all into the arbitrary will of God. Whereas the case is not so desperate as this supposes it to be; for tho' God did give such a command, yet it was not with an intent that it should be obeyed, as the event shewed. And tho' *Abraham* thought it was right to yield obedience to the command, yet (supposing him to be mistaken) this only shewed the weakness of his judgment in that particular, but not that he had a vicious mind; and therefore his moral character is not blemished hereby. As for those questions, namely, why God gave this command, and what were the wise purposes he intended to serve by it? the scripture has given no farther account



count than that it was by way of *trial* to *Abraham*, and therefore whatever is afforded, beyond this, is but *conjecture*. Thus, in the *supplement to the previous question*, I observed, that God gave the command to *Abraham* with an intent to recall it, and thereby, to shew to *Abraham*, and to all his posterity, the *unsuitness* of all *human sacrifices*. But herein I intended no more than a bare conjecture, viz. that God *might* give and recall the command, to answer the wise and good purpose aforesaid; to which I here add, that the command *might* be given in order to convince *Abraham*, that even his *honesty* and *integrity*, when not under the direction of his understanding, might *mislead* him in the conducting of his actions, of which (to appearance at least) this was an instance. And tho' these are mere conjectures, yet I cannot see why they should be given up, before some *better* reason for the command he offered; seeing they are suitable to that *wisdom* and *goodness*, by which God always directs his actions.

I have here but just touched upon the case of *miracles*, because possibly some time or other I may treat of that subject more at large.

These are the reflections which your *query* has occasioned: I submit them to your consideration, and beg leave to subscribe myself,

Reverend S. I. R.,

Your most Humble Servant, &c.



TRACT

TRACT XX.  
A  
VINDICATION  
OF  
GOD's Moral Character,

As to the Cause and Origin of Evil,  
both Natural and Moral. Wherein  
the case of Liberty and Necessity is  
considered, with regard to human  
Actions. In a Letter to a Friend.

S I R,

I Received your kind letter, in which you were  
pleased to express your dissatisfaction, with  
regard to what I have said concerning God's  
*moral character*. You say you have read my  
*previous question*, and the *supplement* to it; but it  
still remains to you a *doubtful case*, and the ground  
of this doubt, is the *evil* which takes place in the  
world; and, accordingly, you reason thus, If  
God is all-knowing and almighty, and if he is in  
reality such a wise and good Being, as I have en-  
deavoured to prove him to be, then it might rea-  
sonably be expected, that he would *prevent evil*,  
by preventing the existence of every thing which  
leads to it, or is any way the *cause* of it. But,  
say you, the contrary to this is evident in fact,  
and that therefore it still remains a *doubtful point*,  
whether God is in reality a wise and a good Being,  
or

or not. I shall be glad if I can offer any thing which may be effectual to remove this difficulty, and give you *satisfaction* in the case. The sum of what you have urg'd may, I think, be fitly expressed in the following question; *namely*, that if God is, in reality, a wise and a good Being, From whence does this evil proceed? But,

Before I return an answer to this question, I beg leave to observe, that as the proposing my *previous question* to publick consideration has drawn on me the delightful employment of vindicating the *moral character* of *Almighty God*, and as this is a point of the utmost importance; so I thought it proper, in order to compleat that work, and thereby close up this subject; *first*, to lay before my reader the several kinds of evidence, upon which the truth and certainty of God's moral character may be suppos'd to depend, or by which he may be proved to be a wise and a good Being, &c. *secondly*, to vindicate that character, as to the cause and origin of *evil*, both natural and moral, by answering the question now before me. And, *thirdly*, to improve the whole, to serve the purposes of *virtue* and *true goodness*, by representing to my reader, what it is which will render him truly *lovely* and *valuable* in himself, and truly *acceptable* and *well-pleasing* to God. But, before I proceed, I shall make one or two previous observations; and accordingly I observe,

*First*, That actions take their denomination of *good* or *evil*, from the good or evil they are *productive* of, from the good or evil *intention* of the actor, or from the good or evil *motive* or *principle* they spring from, and which is the ground or reason of them. So that an action may be good in one respect, and evil in another. As thus, one man may intend to kill another, and that very action, which was design'd to procure the man's death,



death, may be the meant of preserving his life. In this case the action is *good*, with regard to its effect; life is preserv'd by it, but it is evil, with respect to the design of the actor, inasmuch as death was intended. Yea, an action may be good in both these respects, and yet be evil with regard to the motive or principle it springs from. As thus, one man relieves another in distress, with an intent to minister that relief; and he does this, not because it is right and fit, in the nature of things, and out of pity to the distress'd, but only, that he may render himself capable of doing some *greater mischief*, when a proper occasion offers. In this case the action is good, with regard to its *effect*, the distressed person is relieved; and it is good, with respect to what was *immediately intended* by the actor, *viz.* he intended to minister that relief; but it is evil, with regard to the *motive* or *principle* it sprung from, and which was the *ground* or *reason* of it. And, as actions take their denomination of good or evil, upon the different accounts above-mentioned; so it is the latter of these, in which the *morality* or *immorality* of the action is concerned. An action may be good, with regard to its effect, and the actor may intend, that that good effect should be produced by it (as in the instance above) and yet that action would be evil, in a *moral* sense, if the motive or principle, it sprung from, was evil and vicious. Again, I observe,

*Secondly*, That virtue or goodness comes under a two-fold consideration, *viz.* *absolute* and *relative*. By absolute, I mean virtue or goodness consider'd *abstractedly*, or that which has an *intrinsic* goodness in it, when considered simply in itself, and which does not derive its virtuoufness from its *relation* to any other thing. Virtue or goodness, considered as absolute, is reducible into a very narrow compass,



pass, consisting only in one single point; *namely*, in the *communicating happiness* to the suitable subjects of it, or in the endeavouring to do it, by doing or avoiding what appears to be proper for the attainment of that end, from a sense of the *fitness* of such a temper and conduct. This is goodness itself, or what is such consider'd abstractedly, it not deriving its virtuousness from its relation to any other thing. By relative virtue, I mean that which derives its virtuousness from its *relation to goodness*, that is, from its relation to what is absolutely good and virtuous, as above explained. Virtue or goodness, under this consideration, is more extensive, and includes in it *truth, justice, temperance*, and the like. These, as they derive their virtuousness from their relation to goodness; so there are circumstances which will change their nature, and make them otherwise; that is to say, tho' the practice of these, in almost every instance, tends to the common good, yet there may be some possible cases, in which it may be otherwise. Having made the above observations, I shall now proceed to what I propos'd; *namely*,

*First*, To lay before my reader the *several kinds of evidence*, upon which the truth of God's moral character may be suppos'd to depend. And all the proof, which this point is capable of, may, I think, be rang'd under these three heads, *viz.* *first*, divine testimony; *secondly*, experience and observation; and, *thirdly*, the nature and reason of things. The proof, which each of these afford, I shall consider distinctly. And,

*First*, I am to enquire, what proof *divine testimony* affords, or can afford, with regard to the grand question now before us? And in order to set this matter in a true light, I will suppose a person upon the enquiry, whether God is in reality a *wise and a good Being, &c.* I will likewise consider

sider him, as seeking for satisfaction from *divine revelation*, and that therein he finds God testifying of himself, that he is really wise and good, as aforesaid. I say, supposing as before, yet *this alone* does not prove the point, because in this case here is another point taken for granted, *viz.* that *God will not deceive*; which point must not be presumed, but proved. For as the idea of *veracity* is not directly contained in the idea of *necessary existence*; so if God, or the necessary existent Being, may deceive, then his testimony alone is no *certain proof* in the case. So that, before any thing, and consequently the point in question, can be proved from *divine revelation*, this point must first be proved, *viz.* that *God will not deceive*, at least in all those cases, in which the truth of the revelation is for our *advantage*, and the disappointing our trust will be to our *loss*. I say, the nature of the thing requires, that we have a well-grounded assurance, that God will not deceive us, in any of those cases, before we can have any just ground of *confidence*, in any thing which he has revealed. Again, suppose the fore-mentioned person carries his enquiry farther, and examines, whether God is a *God of truth*, and consequently, whether his testimony may be *absolutely relied upon*, in this, or in any other case; and suppose he seeks for satisfaction from *divine revelation*, as before, and that therein he finds God testifying of himself, that he will not *deceive* nor *impose* upon his creatures; yet this, and consequently the fore-mentioned point, is not proved by it, there being just the same ground of *uncertainty* as before. Here is a person, witnessing for himself, that he will not deceive; but whether he will, or no, is still the question; because he may deceive in this, as well as in any other case, here being no more than his own testimony concerning himself, which

testimony alone, in the nature of the thing, is not a proper foundation for *credit*, nor a sufficient ground of *certainly*. And this brings me to consider,

*Secondly*, What proof *experience* and *observation* afford, in the case under consideration? And these, so far as we are capable of judging from them, bear their testimony, that God is a wise and a good Being, &c. Whoever takes a view of the creation, cannot but see the marks of *wisdom*, and *goodness*, that run thro' the whole. This is abundantly evident to all those, who are qualified to examine, and look into the works of nature. The late discoveries that have been made in *astronomy*, *anatomy*, and all the parts of *natural philosophy*, abundantly satisfy the curious and inquisitive, that God, has in all his works, *wisely* exercised his natural properties, to serve the purposes of *benevolence*. But then, it must be remember'd, that the practising an action, which is productive of *real good*, and the frequent repetition of such actions, are not certain signs of a *moral property* (that is, that those actions proceed from a principle of true goodness) because the ground, or reason of them, may be not a *moral motive*, but some other cause; seeing God may, with regard to his natural liberty, act from arbitrary pleasure, or from vain-glory, that he may have the empty praise of his creatures, and the like. And consequently, tho' the repeated instances of God's performing actions, that are productive of much good, and the want of an instance of his ever practising the contrary, are a *strong presumption*, and make it *highly probable*, that such a moral property takes place in him; yet these alone do not amount to an *absolute proof*, that it certainly is so; because the action, tho' ever so often repeated, is not sufficient to discover the *motive*

it



proceeded from. And this leads me to  
quire,

*Thirdly*, What proof the *nature of things* affords, in order to evince the truth and certainty of the point in question? And here I must beg leave to re-assume the argument which I have already laid down (both in my *previous question*, and in my *supplement* to it) and represent it more large, for the *fuller establishment* of the present proposition. That God is, and what he is with regard to his natural properties, I shall not enter into, nor enter upon the proof of; but shall take it for granted, that God is, and that he is necessarily an immense, eternal, all-knowing, all-powerful, a self-sufficient, and an unchangeable being. This being allowed, from hence it will follow, that as God is always capable of doing what is most *worthy* and *valuable* in itself, and which, in the nature of things, is *right, good, best* and *fittest* to be done, seeing he knows wherein goodness, fitness, and valuableness of every action lies; so he *always will act thus*, because right, good, fit, &c. are so very beautiful, and excellent in themselves; and are so preferable, in the nature of things, to their contraries, that they always will afford a *proper* and *sufficient motive* to influence the divine will, and consequently to direct God's actions, in all his dealings with his creatures, seeing he cannot possibly have any *self-interest* to mislead him, and therefore cannot possibly be under a temptation to act otherwise. And, thus I prove, that God will always exercise his *natural properties*, (*viz.* his knowledge and power) to serve the purposes of *benevolence*. For God cannot but know, from the nature of the thing, that the communicating of happiness, in the most proper way, is prosecuting the most *noble and valuable end*, which his natural properties

are capable of prosecuting, and attaining; for he will always be a *reason*, or *motive* strong enough to induce him, when he does act, to exercise his knowledge and power in serving these purposes, and will always secure him from prosecuting the contraries. And, thus, from the nature of this, I prove God to be a *God of truth*, who will not deceive with a lie. For tho' God can have no interest of his own to serve, in any revelation that he makes to his creatures, and consequently, they have no *excitement* from *self-interest*, to reveal either truth or falsehood; yet, those, to whom God gives a revelation, are capable of being *interested in it*; and when that is the case, then the nature of the thing requires, or makes it fit, that it should be dealt *fairly*, and *candidly* with; and consequently, there is a moral unfitness in *deceiving them*, it being a deceiving them to their hurt. And as truth, in *such a case*, is right, and fit, and highly preferable to deceit, and falsehood; so he will always dispose such a Being as God is, to prefer the former to the latter, and to govern his actions accordingly; seeing he cannot possibly be under a temptation, from any other motive to act otherwise. And, thus I prove, that God governs his actions by the principles of *reason*. By which I mean, that God in his dealings with his creatures, with regard to what he requires from, and dispenses to them, whether in a way of favour or displeasure, does not act arbitrarily, or from mere will and pleasure; but on the contrary, he makes the reason of things the rule and measure of his actions. He has a regard to the *moral fitness* of what he requires, and to the *suitableness* of the *subjects*, to whom his corrections and his favours are dispensed. To command what is *fit* and *suitable* for a wise and good being, as a command, and what is proper for creatures

constituted, circumstanced, and related as we are, to be in the practice of is so *right*, and *agreeable* in itself, and so *preferable* to its contrary, that God will be disposed, from the reason of the thing, to make it the *rule*, and *measure* of his authority. Whereas, on the other side, to be arbitrary in his government, and thereby to act the part of a *weak* and *childish*, or of an *evil* and *vicious* being, is so *mean* and *disreputable*, that God will, upon that account, be at the farthest distance from it. Again, to love and value, to hate and despise *arbitrarily*, either persons, or things, without regarding the *suitableness* or the *unsuitableness* of the persons, or the things themselves; or on the other hand, to love and value what is *truly* lovely and *valuable* in itself, and to hate and despise what is *really disagreeable*, in the nature of things; the latter of these is so *right* and *fit*, and so *preferable* to the former, that God will be disposed, upon that account, to make it the *rule* and *measure* of his actions. Thus again, to reward, and punish *arbitrarily*, without making the *fitness* of things, and the *suitableness* of the subjects, the rule, and measure of such dispensations; or on the other hand, to reward and punish according to the *rules of reason*, that is, according as creatures have made themselves, by their personal virtuousness or viciousness, more or less, the suitable and proper objects of his approbation or dislike; the latter of these is so *right* and *fit* in itself, and so *preferable* to the former, that God will be disposed, from the reason of the thing, to make it the *rule* and *measure* of his actions.

From what I have said, I think, it plainly appears, that the *nature of things* evidently, and certainly, proves God to be a *wise*, and *good Being*; who prudently exercises his natural properties, to serve the purposes of *benevolence*, and that he



governs his actions by the principles of *reason*. The sum of the evidence in short is this, *namely*, that as a *right use* and *application* of knowledge and power, to serve the purposes of kindness and benevolence, and as acting by the *rules of reason*, are truly *valuable* and *excellent* in themselves, and highly *preferable*, in the nature of the thing, to their contraries; so, such a Being as God is, who has, independently in himself, *at knowledge* and power, and therefore perfectly knows the *moral* difference betwixt these, and *at liberty* (with regard to every other being, and with regard to any natural or physical necessity) for the choice of either of these, and has no self-interest to *mislead* him; he will, from the nature of the thing, be disposed to prefer, in his choice, a *right use* of his natural properties, and a *rational* conduct, before their contraries. Having thus examined the several kinds of evidence, upon which the *truth* of God's moral character may be supposed to depend, and thereby proved, at large, that God is in reality a *wise*, and a *good Being*, &c. I now proceed,

*Secondly*, To vindicate that character, as to the *cause* and *origin* of evil, by returning an answer to the grand question now in debate, *namely*, that if God is in reality a wise and good Being, *From whence then does evil proceed?* To which I answer, that this possibly is a knot that is more easily cut than untied; and tho' no man could be able to give a satisfactory answer to this question, yet that would not *weaken* the evidence which I have produced, much less would it prove God to be *otherwise*, than what I have endeavour'd to prove him to be; because the difficulty in this case may not arise from the state of things, but from the *weakness* of our understandings, and the *shortness* of our knowledge, which render us  
uncapable

uncapable of seeing thro', and to the end of them, The evil, that is in the world, is usually distinguished into two sorts, *namely, natural and moral.*

As to natural evil, this is occasioned partly by the *follies and vices* of men, partly by *superstition*, and other like causes, with which God is not in the least concern'd, and therefore it cannot, with any colour of *justice*, be put to any of his account. And, as to all those evils which are the consequence of the *natural frame and constitution* of the world, these plainly appear to be the effect and produce of *wisdom and goodness*. For tho' particular persons are accidentally sufferers by these means, yet the *good* of the *whole* is persecuted, and carried on by them. Thus, storms and tempests accidentally become the occasion of much evil to *many individuals*; and yet these are *necessary*, as they *rarify the air*, and thereby render this planet a convenient habitation for a multitude of creatures, whom God hath provided to taste plentifully of his *goodness* upon it; and as the not removing the *cause* of these disorders would *introduce* more evil, upon the *whole*, than is introduced by the disorders themselves. And, as to pain itself, which perhaps constitutes the strongest part of the objection, our being *liable* to it possibly is *necessary*, in order to render us *capable* of tasting the pleasures of life. Pain and sensible pleasure, for any thing we can see to the contrary, are so *connected* (if I may so speak) in the nature of things, that we cannot be *capable* of the one, but we must be *liable* to the other. That very capacity, we have to taste the pleasures of life, renders us capable of their contraries. Besides, pain, in the nature of the thing, is highly necessary, as it is the great guard and *security* of life. If the restraining from food, or the being wounded, or  
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bruised, or the touching of fire, or the like, did not *give pain*, then life and health, and all the enjoyments arising from them, would be guardless. Men would be perpetually running into danger, were they not under some sensible restraint; and therefore pain is wisely provided to be a guard and a security from it. So that, natural evil, as far as God is concern'd in the production of it, is the effect of *wisdom* and *goodness*. It is true, God might, if he pleased, have prevented this sort of evil; but then he would have prevented himself from exercising that *kindness* and *benevolence*, which he has so plentifully dispensed thro' the world. But,

Possibly, it may be thought, that the *great difficulty* is still behind; for tho' that good, which is in the world, could not take place, in the present state of things, without giving *occasion* for the evils, aforesaid; yet this, at best, is but doing that which is productive *partly* of good, and *partly* of evil. Whereas if God be such a wise and good Being, and be indued with such knowledge and power, as is here supposed, then he would take care so to act, as that evil should not be the *necessary consequence* of his productions; because evil is the same in itself, and is as fit to be *avoided* or *prevented*, whether it be produced by accident or design, seeing such accidents are supposed to be foreseen. To which it may be replied; this objection is founded upon a supposition, that it is *possible*, in the nature of things, for God to give us those pleasures we here enjoy, without our being *any way liable* to their contraries. Whereas, this may possibly be a mistake; and, till it be made good, the objection will be of no force. Besides, there is a *strong presumption*, that what is *supposed* in the objection is not the case. For as God will be disposed, from the moral fitness of  
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the thing, to dispense his favours to his creatures in such a way as will *most effectually* contribute to their happiness; and as the giving us pleasures in a way, wherein we are not liable to their contraries (supposing such a thing can be) *seems more likely* to answer that end, than giving them in the way he now does; so this makes it *highly probable*, that it is not possible, in the nature of things, for us to *taste* those pleasures, without our being *liable* to their contraries; seeing they are given in a way, in which we are capable of suffering all the evils we at present are liable to. And tho' I would by no means take upon me, *absolutely*, to determine what is, or is not possible, in the nature of things; yet, with regard to the present question, I beg leave to offer what follows.

Happiness and misery are not only distinguished from, but are usually considered as opposite and contrary to each other. By happiness I mean *pleasure* and *delight*, that is, the happy person is pleased and delighted. And by misery I mean, *uneasiness* and *grief*, that is, the miserable person is uneasy and grieved. The happiness which mankind are here capable of enjoying, or at least, which *nature* leads them to, may, I think, be rang'd under these three heads, *viz. sensible, intellectual, and moral*. By *sensible* happiness, I mean that pleasure and delight which arises from the enjoyment of *sensible objects*; with regard to which I have already observed, that the capacity we have, for tasting those pleasures, render us capable of their contraries, And to say, in this case, that it is possible for things to be so disposed, as that we may be *capable* of such pleasures, without our being *any way liable* to their contraries, is to presume a point, without any thing in reason or experience to support it. By *intellectual* happiness, I



mean that pleasure which arises from the *discovery* and *contemplation* of *truth*; with regard to which I have this to observe, that all the pleasure we taste, of this kind, are either to our *preceding ignorance*, to the *care* and *pains* we take in the discovery of truth, or to the *degree* of our knowledge, when we attain to a *greater measure* than other men. All truth, when consider'd sepeate from these, is alike as truth (tho' not of the like importance to us) the object of the understanding, and as such it must afford the same delight. If we all could, with equal ease and clearness, see all the relations of things, they must all, in the nature of the thing, equally effects us. We should taste as much pleasure in knowing and contemplating that two and two make four, as in knowing or contemplating any proposition which now appears the *most difficult*, and so affords the most pleasure; or rather, we should not have pleasure from any of them. Now if this be the case, then it is evident, that the *capacity* we have, for tasting this kind of pleasure, renders us *capble* of its contrary. We could not be delighted in the discovery or contemplation of truth, if we were not capable of being ignorant, and of the unhappiness which arises from it. By *moral happiness*, I mean that pleasure and delight which arises from the *love* and *practice* of *virtue* or *goodness*. This pleasure as it is the most noble and excellent in its nature, and as it is what mankind seems design'd to taste upon this globe, so it is the most permanent and durable. Other pleasures drop in the enjoyment, and the *indulging* them to any great degree destroys them; but this kind of pleasure, the more it is indulged, the more it increases; and yet, *goodness* cannot take place, without *indigent objects* for it to be exercised upon; and consequently the supposition of *moral happiness*, with regard to us, suppo-

ses likewise a *possibility* of *vice* and *misery*. If there are any other ways of being happy, than those I have been considering, these, I imagine, will appear to have their *allay*, like those above-mentioned, that is, we cannot be capable of such pleasures, without our being liable to their contraries. Thus I have, in some measure, vindicated the *goodness* of *God*, by answering what is urged against it from *natural evil*; and have shewn, that if God had prevented it, he would have prevented himself from exercising his goodness and loving-kindness in that way, in which he now gives pleasure and delight to his creatures.

As to moral evil, this possibly may be reducible into a much narrower compass, than it is usually thought to be. For as there are many things that are *esteemed virtuous*, which have no *moral goodness* or *virtuousness* in them; so there are many other things that are *esteemed vicious*, which have no *moral turpitude* or *viciousness* in them. And, as to that which properly constitutes *vice*, or *moral evil*; this is occasioned by that *liberty* and *freedom* of action, which God, by constituting us *moral agents*, has rendered us capable of. By liberty, in this case, I mean, that every man has power to act, or to refrain from acting, *agreeably* with, or *contrary* to any motive that presents, without being *constrained* to it by any foreign power or agent whatever.

Man is a compound being, consisting partly of *understanding*, partly of *appetite*, of *affection*, &c. and each part of this composition affords a distinct kind of *motive*, or *excitement* to action, or to refrain from acting. And thus a man is excited to act, or to refrain from acting; sometimes from a motive arising from one part of his composition, sometimes from another, and sometimes  
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from several motives arising from several parts of that composition. And, tho' motive is *necessary* to action, seeing the active faculty will not be exerted without some *previous reason* to induce to it, yet we are not the less free; for as motives influence by *persuasion*, and not by compulsion so every man has power to *comply* with, or to *reject* these excitements, that is, every man is at liberty to act, or to refrain from acting, agreeably with, or contrary to what each of those motives, considered *singly*, would excite him to. And that this is the case, is evident in fact; we feel or experience such a power, or that we are thus at liberty, and every action we do is the product of such a choice. And, tho' when an excitement to action takes place, some motive or other will *finally prevail*; and that motive, with regard to the event, is as effectual to *produce* or *prevent* the action as physical necessity; yet there is not the like *compulsion* in one case, as in the other. The motive that prevails being not a *power*, or *active cause*, but barely a *passive reason* of, or an excitement to the action, or to the refraining from acting. There being this apparent difference between *motive* and *physical necessity*, viz. the one *forces*, the other does but *invite*; one is an *address* to an *active*, the other is *acting upon a passive being*; the one supposes *liberty*, the other *passiveness* in the subject influenced or wrought on by them. And consequently man *has power* and is as much at *liberty* to reject the motive that *does prevail*, as he has power, and is at liberty to *reject* those motives that do not. To this I may add, that if motives did work *irresistably*, then the active power would *unavoidably* be *excited* to act, or be *restrained* from acting, whenever any *motive* is present to the mind. But *that this is not the case*, is evident from experience;

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sometimes the motive, that presents, prevails, and sometimes it does not. Again, if motives work irresistibly, then in every instance, where *two motives* are present to the mind, one exciting to *act*, and another exciting to the *contrary* (which is frequently the case) a man must be under a necessity of *doing* and *avoiding* the *same* action, at the *same* time, which is plainly impossible in the nature of things.

If it should be urged, that as in physical causes, the *stronger* power *prevails*, tho' both work necessarily; so in this case, the *stronger motive* prevails, and the weaker would do it, did not the stronger *intervene* and *prevent* it; which shews that moral and physical causes work alike *irresistibly*. I answer, the strength of this objection lies in the *wrong application* of the term *stronger*; it being applied to the motive that *prevails*, without any regard to what is stronger or weaker, in the nature of things. The subjects which fall under the cognizance of the understanding are such, as relates either to the *truth*, or to the *fitness* of things. With regard to the former, the terms *stronger* or *weaker* are only applicable to it, as they figuratively express the *sufficiency* or *insufficiency* of those arguments, by which the truth of a proposition is designed to be established, there being no other way, in which arguments are capable of being compared; and accordingly, an argument is said to be *strong* or *weak*, as it *more* or *less* proves or confirms the truth of the proposition it is brought to prove. And, with regard to the latter, the fore-mentioned terms are applicable to it, only as they figuratively express the *fitness* or *unfitness* of those actions, which the motives of persuasion would excite us to, there being no other way, in which motives are capable of being compar'd; and accordingly a motive is strong or weak, as  
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the *action* is more or less *fit* to be performed which it excites to. And tho', with regard to *physical causes*, that which is strongest always prevails; yet it is otherwise with regard to *moral causes*. Of these sometimes the *stronger*, sometimes the *weaker* prevails; and the ground of this difference is evident, *namely*, that what we call moral causes, strictly speaking, are no causes at all; but barely *passive reasons* of, or *excitements* to the action, or to the refraining from acting. Which excitements we have power, or are at liberty to comply with or reject, as I have shewed above. And, thus at one time a man chuses to gratify a natural appetite, tho' he is convinced of the *unsifeness* of that gratification, and then the *weaker* motives prevails; and at another time, he rejects that excitement, because of its *unsifeness*, and then the *stronger* prevails. Now to say, in this case, that the motive, arising from the man's *appetite*, was strongest at one time, and that, arising from his *judgment*, was strongest at the other; this is to determine the strength weakness of a motive from the *event* only; and not from what is stronger or weaker in the *nature of things*. And to say that the motive *prevailed*, because it was strongest, is the same as to say, that it prevailed, because it *did prevail*; prevailing itself being made the *ground* of that distinction. To this I may add, that as one argument, in the nature of the thing, is *stronger* than another, that is, one does really prove what the other does not; and as our understandings do not *constitute* that difference, but only judge *right* or *wrong* concerning it; so to say that a conclusive argument is weak, because it *does not convince*, is preposterous; it being evident, that the defect, or weakness, is not in the argument, but in the *man's understanding*, who is not convinced by it. So, in like manner, one motive is, in the nature

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of the thing, stronger than another, that is, it is *fitter* to excite to action; and our *wills* do not constitute that difference, but only *determine* us to a right or wrong choice. And therefore to say, that a motive, which excites to a *right choice*, is weak, because it does not prevail, is alike preposterous; it being alike evident, that the *defect* or *weakness* is not in the motive, but in our *wills*, which *refuse* to be influenced or wrought on by it. Again,

If it should be urged, that the *exertion* of the *active faculty* in man is necessarily connected with the *last judgment*, or *perception* of the *understanding*: and as man is allowed to be *passive*, with regard to such judgment or perception; so consequently, those actions cannot be free which are *necessarily connected* with it. I answer, the *preception* and the *judgment* of the understanding may be consider'd, either as the *same thing*, or else as *two different things*: that is to say, tho' every act of judging may be truly said to be an act of perception; yet every act of perception is not an act of judging. So that *perception*, when distinguished from *judging*, is the *seeing things* as they are (or as they appear to be) with their *circumstances* and *consequences*; and *judging* is the seeing, or judging of their *fitness* or *unfitness*, as they stand related to those circumstances, &c. and, tho' the understanding does as *truly perceive* the fitness or unfitness of things (or what they appear to be) when it judges, as it doth the *things themselves*, with their *circumstances*, &c. yet these are plainly two distinct kinds of perception, the one *natural*, the other *moral*, if I may thus distinguish them. And, tho' we are *passive* with regard to these perceptions, and cannot see things otherwise than as they appear to us, whether in a natural or a moral view; and tho' there cannot be such a thing as action, without a *precedent preception*; yet perception and  
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action are not necessarily connected. I shall explain this by a familiar example; Two men are in company together; the one offers in words to give the other some valuable thing, and likewise reacheth forth his hand to give him that thing; the other, not only perceives the *kind offer* of his friend, and the *thing* thus offered as likewise the *valuableness* of that thing; but he also *perceives*, or *judges*, that it is a thing not fit to be given by his friend, and that it is unfit for him to receive it from him, with regard to each of their *circumstances*. In this case, tho' the thing be perceived, as aforesaid, and tho' there could be no place for accepting, or refusing, if there had been no *perception* of the offer; yet that perception is not necessarily connected, that is, it is not the *physical cause* of the action that follows. The man, notwithstanding these perceptions, has *power*, and is at *liberty* covetously to *accept* or generously to *refuse* the gift, which his friend has so kindly, but unfitly offered him. There being not any thing more clear and evident, from experience, than this, *namely*, that one man covetously prefers the *lesser good* of himself to the *greater good* of another, or to the *good* of the *publick*, when he sees that these come in competition; and another man generously prefers the *greater good* of another, or the *good* of the *publick*, to the *lesser good* of himself, when those come in competition; which could not possibly be, if perception and action were *necessarily connected*, as aforesaid. For if that were the case, then all men would be *generous* or *selfish* alike, as their understandings inform them of the consequences of their actions, with regard to the good or evil of themselves or others; the same *cause* would produce the same *effect*; the same *perception* must necessarily produce the same *action* in *every subject*. But surely the contrary to this is evident  
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in fact. Besides. That perception and action are not *necessarily connected*, as aforesaid, is farther evident from hence; a man in a dream has a real perception, not only of the *excitements* to action, but of *action itself*, even whilst the *active power* is at rest. And thus, a man has a real perception of his *eating* and *drinking*, *walking* and *talking*, and the like; and yet none of the *motions* of the body take place, by which those *complex actions* are performed. And from hence I argue, if the real perception of the excitements to action, and of the actions themselves which they excite to, be not sufficient to produce real action, which is the present case, then it will unavoidably follow, that action is not *necessarily connected* with perception, but is produced by some other cause. It is true, action does *sometimes* follow or accompany such perception; men sometimes talk and walk, and perform other actions in their dreams; but this is *seldom*. Whereas if action were necessarily connected with perception, this would *always* be the case. And tho' the perceptive faculty is *deceived*, the objects of perception being *fictional*, and not real; yet that cannot alter the case, with regard to the *physical influence* of such perception; seeing the perception itself is real, whether the objects of it are so, or not. A man has as real a perception, and is as much convinced at the time, that he eats and drinks when he is asleep, as when he performs those actions when awake; only they arise from, and are produced by *different causes*. In *fine*, perception and action are the effects of two causes, which have no more connection than *activeness* and *passiveness*. If I pass along the street, and a *miserable object* be presented to my view, my perception is *necessary*; the idea of that object being raised in my mind, independent of my will; and if I am conscious that I have power to deliver the *aforesaid object* from the misery it labours un-



der, and if I judge that it is right and fit I should do so; I am, with regard to these perceptions, so far *passive*, as that, if I *attend* to the subject, I cannot think otherwise of it than I do. But if I minister that relief, this must be done by a *power*, in the exercise of which I am not *passive* but *active*: I must give such *motions* to my body, as are necessary to produce that effect, when I am at liberty either to *exert* the active faculty, or to be at rest. And if such motion does take place, it is not the perception of the *miserable object*, nor of my *ability* to relieve, nor of the *fitness* of that relief, nor yet the perception of *relieving* itself, which is the *physical cause* of that motion; all these perceptions may take place in a dream, and yet no motion follow; motion being performed by a power, which is as distinct from the power of perception, as perception is from action.

If it should be farther urged, allowing that perception and action are not necessarily connected; yet seeing every man always does what appears to him to be *best at the time*, therefore *liberty* and *necessity*, in the issue, amount to the *same thing*. Before I return an answer to this objection, I find it proper to observe, that the term *best* is comparative. For when several things or actions come in competition, as to their goodness, fitness, and the like, and the understanding has taken a view of them in these respects, then it judges that particular thing or action to be *best*, which, upon such enquiry, appears to have the *preference* in that particular wherein the comparison is made. So that, to do always what appears to be *best, at the time*, is to act always upon a *judgment* form'd, as aforesaid. This being premised,

I answer, *first*, man is so far from following his judgment in all cases, that on the contrary, he sometimes *acts without it*, and sometimes *acts against it*, as is abundantly evident from experience. By acting without judgment, I do not mean

mean that a man *acts without thinking*; but this I mean, that he acts without entering into the *question*, whether the action be good or evil, fit or unfit. He drinks to gratify a natural inclination, without examining, whether it is *best* to gratify that inclination, or to *deny* it. And as we *sometimes* act without judgment, so sad experience shews, that we *sometimes* act against it. A man who is thoroughly convinced, from experience, that *drinking to excess* will draw upon him such illness, as is ten times more than equivalent to the pleasure he takes in that indulgence; he will, notwithstanding that *conviction*, drink to excess, even tho' his conviction of the *sad consequence* of that excess be urged to him as a *reason* against it. And not only in this, but also in many other cases, our appetites and passions lead us to act not only *without*, but *against our judgment*. And, tho' full conviction of the unsuitness of an action is, in the nature of the thing, a proper *motive* or *reason* against such action; yet it does not *always prevail*. The understanding may interpose, and urge even *mathematical demonstration*, in order to *engage* to action, or to *refrain* from it: and yet, alas, these *bonds* of full conviction are *too weak* to hold men with. These ropes are *sometimes* broken in sunder like a thread, when *passion* or *appetite* interposes, and whilst the *Samson's lock* of liberty remains. Again,

I answer, *secondly*, supposing man did always act from a conviction of the fitness of the action, yet this would not *affect* his *liberty*; because his faculties are exercised in the *same way*, and with the *same freedom* when he *follows his judgment*, as when he acts *against it*. That is, the fitness of the action is no more than a *motive*, or the *ground*, or *reason* of acting in one case; as the motives which arise from *appetite*, *passion*, or any other part of our

composition, are in any other case. And therefore, to say that *liberty* and *necessity*, in the issue, amount to the *same thing*, is the same as to say, that *two different* and *contrary* ideas, in the issue, amount to the *same idea*; which, surely, is most *absurd* and *contradictory*, and introduces the utmost confusion.

If it should be farther urged, that by being *best at the time*, as in the objection above, is not meant what at the time is judged best upon the whole, but only what will then give the greatest present pleasure: I answer, that every act of self-denial is a manifest proof of the contrary, in which men forego what to them appears the greatest present pleasure; either to ward off some greater future evil from themselves, or others, or else to procure some greater future good. Upon the whole, I think I may venture to say, that tho' God is the *author of nature*, and consequently of all the parts of that composition, from whence the *motives* to action arise; yet he cannot *fairly* be charged with the *actions themselves*, which those motives are the *ground* or *reason* of; seeing he has left the *direction* of this well composed system (*viz.* the *human composition*) to be the subject of every man's *free choice*. Again,

If it should be urged, that it is allowed, on all hands, to be *impossible* for God to act contrary to his *moral perfections*; and if so, then his actions must be necessary; and if God's actions are necessary, then ours may be so. I answer, the strength of this objection lies in the *improper* use of the word *impossible*; which, in this case, is figuratively used to express the *prevailing influence* of those motives of persuasion, which we know will as effectually *prevent*, as any physical impossibility. And thus we say, it is morally impossible for God to do evil; by which is meant, that the moral



moral unfitness of such a conduct affords a *motive*, which, by its persuasive influence, will as effectually *prevent* God from doing evil, as any physical impossibility, that is, as any impossibility arising from *physical impediments* can do. So that the ground of this knowledge, *viz.* that God will not do evil, does not arise from our knowing that he wants either power or liberty to do evil, or that the forementioned *motive* will always *necessarily prevent* every intelligent being from acting thus, and thereby that it is strictly impossible; but it arises from hence, that, as in the nature of the thing, no action can take place, without some motive to excite it, and as the doing evil is morally unfit; so that unfitness will prevent every intelligent being from doing evil in all those cases in which there is not any thing in the composition of that being, which affords an *excitement* or *temptation* to it; which is the case with respect to God. And this moral restraint we *commonly*, tho' improperly or figuratively, call *moral impossibility*. Again,

If it should be urged, That God *foreknows* all the actions of men, and consequently, that those actions are not free, *prescience* and *liberty* being inconsistent: I *answer*, that this objection is built upon a two-fold presumption, *viz.* *first*, that God *does foreknow* all the actions of men. *Secondly*, that *prescience* and *liberty* are *inconsistent*.

If it should be said of the *first* of these, that it is supposed in God's *natural* character, as he is possessed of *all perfection*: I *answer*, if the actions of voluntary agents are *not foreknowable*, in the nature of things, then *prescience* is not supposed in God's natural character; because it cannot be an *imperfection* in God for him not to foreknow, what is *not knowable* in nature. And if they are foreknowable, in the nature of things, then the divine *prescience* is no objection against liberty.



If it should be farther urged, that as the *excitements* to action arise from the several parts of our *composition*, and as God perfectly foreknows the *measure* of men's *understandings*, their *disposition*, *temper* and *frame*, these being the *result* of that composition, and the circumstances that attend it; so he foreknows what *motives* will *sute* all tempers and dispositions, as likewise when each motive will *present*; and from hence he foreknows, or rightly judges, what *influence* they will have upon the will, and consequently he foreknows the action itself.

I answer, *first*, if there were such an connection betwixt the excitements to action, and action itself, so as that one did *necessarily* follow the other, then I grant, that as this might be a proper foundation for prescience, so it would be destructive of liberty. But this is by no means the case; the excitements to action, and the will, having no necessary connection at all, as I have shewn above. And, to say, that God foreknows what motives will *sute* all tempers and dispositions, is no more than to say, that he foreknows what will be motives, or excitements to action, to persons of all tempers and dispositions; but this, I think, cannot, in the nature of the thing, be a foundation for *foreknowing absolutely* how a man will determine from such motives, seeing the volition of his will is not necessarily connected with them. Again,

I answer, *secondly*, that, which is here made the ground of prescience, is in reality *prescience itself*. For as the measure of the understanding, the disposition, temper, and frame of particular persons, and of the same person at different times, are the result of the human composition, together with a *variety* of circumstances that concur; so these *circumstances*, as likewise that which gives occasion

tion for the excitements to action, are partly the product of *physical causes*, partly *accidental*, not depending (for any thing that appears) upon the understanding, disposition, temper, or frame of any intelligent being whatever; and partly such as arise from our having to do with other *agents* like our-selves; the knowledge of all which plainly *includes prescience*, and therefore cannot be the ground or reason of it.

If it should be said of the *second* point presumed in the objection (*viz.* the *inconsistency* of prescience with liberty) that it is capable of being demonstrated thus. All effects depend upon their causes; and, therefore, in order *absolutely* to *foreknow* the effect, it is absolutely necessary to *know* the cause. And as actions are caused by the volition of the will; so that volition must be *known*, or else the action cannot be *foreknown*, which is the effect of it. Again, the volition of the will is the effect of some precedent cause, or else it is the *first mover*. If it is the effect of a precedent cause, then as that cause must be known in order to foreknow its effect; so consequently man is not free, because the volition of his will is *determined* by that cause. But if the will is the first mover, then its volition cannot be foreknowable, in the nature of things; because there is not the *knowledge* of any precedent cause to discover it by.

I answer, tho' the effects of physical causes cannot be *absolutely* foreknown, without the knowledge of their causes, or unless that knowledge be communicated from those who know those causes and those causes cannot be foreknown, without the knowledge of their causes, and so on; yet, I think, this does not *conclude* against the *foreknowledge* of the volition of the will in *all* cases, even tho' that volition has no precedent cause to disco-

ver it by. For, tho' the will is the *first mover* and consequently its volition has no cause external to, or without itself; yet that volition cannot take place, without some *previous reason* or *motive* to induce to it. And, therefore, if an excitement to action takes place, and that excitement is foreknowable in the nature of things; and if it is likewise foreknowable that no other excitement can possibly take place to influence in the choice; then that excitement will be the ground or reason of the volition of the will, and consequently such volition is foreknowable, in the nature of things. And thus it holds good, in the negative, as we foreknow that God will *not do evil*, inasmuch as we know that there cannot possibly take place any reason or motive to induce him to it. And thus far we foreknow that God *will do good*, inasmuch as we know, that the doing good is truly valuable in itself, and, as such, is a motive proper and sufficient to influence the divine will, and consequently to excite him to action, whenever the nature and circumstances of the case render it fit and proper that he should do so. And, if we could *foresee* such a case, in which it would be morally fit for God to act thus, or thus then we should have an *equal certainty* of the event, *before*, as after the action. And tho' the event would be certain, antecedently to the action, yet the divine action would not be necessary, but *free*: that is, in such a case, God would not be moved or determined to act from any natural or physical necessity; but he would be *persuaded* to it, if I may thus speak, from a *moral motive*; which motive is not a power, or physical cause, but barely a passive reason of the action. And therefore to say, that *certainty of the event* makes the *action necessary*, this appears plainly to be a *mistake*, because certainty, in the present case,  
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does not arise from any natural necessity God is under to act, but from the *knowledge* of the *fitness* of the action; which fitness, as it will be (not the physical cause, but) the *ground* or *reason* of acting to God; so the knowledge of that fitness will be the ground of *prescience*, and consequently of *certainly* of the event, with respect to us. But with regard to men, who have *different motives* arising from their composition, one exciting to act, and another exciting to the contrary; this I allow very much alters the case, and renders the foreknowledge of the volition of the will, in such cases, more *difficult* to be *accounted for*; tho', I think, it is not a *proof* of the contrary. And therefore, absolutely to determine that prescience and human liberty are, or that they are not consistent; this, I think, is presuming, and is void of proof.

As to the term *contingent*, which is sometimes made use of in this case, if it be applied only to those *precarious circumstances* of human actions, which take place not only without, but sometimes contrary to the will and intention of the agent, and so are perfectly accidental; then, I think, that there is not any thing in nature, which can be a *foundation* for *prescience*, with regard to such casual circumstances. And, I take it, the case is the same with regard to all those actions which are occasioned by them. For if there is not any foundation for foreknowing the *accidental circumstances* of human actions, then there can be no *foundation* for *foreknowing* those actions, which depend upon such circumstances, as the *ground* and *reason* of them. As thus, a man throws a stone with an intent to hit a dog, but missing the dog, he hits a man passing by. In this case as the circumstance of the action, *viz. hitting the man*, was not only without, but contrary to the will



will and intention of the agent, and therefore was perfectly accidental; so, I think, that there is not any thing in nature which can be a *foundation* for *prescience*, with respect to this precarious circumstance. And, if so, then whatever actions *follow*, or are *occasioned* by it, these must stand upon the same foot, with regard to *prescience*, as the *circumstance* of the *action* does, which either mediately or immediately is the ground or reason of them. But this, I think, does not affect the case, as to the *inconsistency* of *prescience* with human liberty. Upon the whole, my answer to the objection is this. I have already proved that man is free, by shewing that the motives which excite him to act, or to refrain from acting, influence *persuasively*, and not necessarily; which persuasive influence every man has power, or is at liberty to *comply* with, or *reject*; and consequently, either there is no *prescience*, or else *prescience* and human liberty are consistent; but which of these is the case, as it is not easy to determine, so it is beside the present argument. Again,

If it should be urged, tho' we are at liberty to act from what motive we please, and tho' motive is not an active or physical cause, but only a passive reason of acting, or of refusing to act; yet as we are not *arbitrary* with regard to what shall please, but are determined *independant* of our will; so consequently we are not free, or, in other words *virtue* and *vice* are not the subjects of our free choice.

I answer, *first*, if the freedom of an agent consists in his having power and being at liberty to constitute a *difference* in things, that is, *arbitrarily* to determine what shall be good or evil, right or wrong; and consequently, what shall be pleasing or displeasing, then it must be granted, that there  
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neither is nor can be any such thing as liberty, because these arise from, and are founded in the nature of things, independent of any such determination. Besides, the *supposition* of such a power carries in it an absurdity; for as right and wrong, good and evil, necessarily suppose a *natural difference* in things (take away that difference, and there can be no such distinctions, *crooked* and *straight* cannot take place without a difference in nature) so without that difference, there cannot be a foundation for being *pleased* with one thing, and *displeased* with another, but all things must please or displease alike. And, therefore, to suppose a power to make a difference in things, when there is none in nature, is to suppose that things can differ, while they are alike, which is a contradiction. But farther,

I answer, *secondly*, that the liberty here contended for, as the foundation of *virtue* and *vice*, does not arise from a power or liberty to constitute a difference in things, but it arises from a power or freedom to act *agreeably* with, or *contrary* to the *moral fitness* of things, supposing such a difference in nature. And, for the clearing of this point I observe, that virtue or goodness, strictly and properly so called, consists in *communicating happiness* to the *suitable* subjects of it, or in the endeavouring to do it, by doing and avoiding what appears to be proper for the attainment of that end; and that vice, or moral evil, consists in *communicating unhappiness* to the *improper* subjects of it, or in contributing either negatively or positively to that unhappiness. Again, I farther observe, that as man is a *compound being*, so this renders him capable of several distinct kinds of pleasure, which in other words we call happiness, and the capacity he has, for *tasting those pleasures*, renders him capable of *their*



their contraries, as I have before shewn. He is hereby also qualified for *society*, that is, for the *giving* and *receiving* pleasure to, and from others of his kind; and this likewise renders him capable of giving and receiving the contrary. And as the appetites and passions, which in part constitute human nature, dispose men to procure the comforts, and guard against the evils of life, both for themselves and others; so they are capable of being *vitiating*, that is, of being indulged to an excess, and thereby of disposing men contrarily to what they were designed, and what the moral fitness of things requires. Man is also endowed with a faculty of *understanding*, which renders him capable of discerning the moral difference in things, and thereby of knowing that it is right and fit, in the nature of things, that all others should be happy as well as himself; and consequently, that it is right and fit that he should prosecute the happiness not only of himself, but of all others as far as it is in his power, and is consistent with his own; yea, that he should *deny* himself, when his own and the common felicity come in *competition*.

Man being thus constituted, he is hereby qualified to render himself a *generous* or a *selfish* creature, that is, he is qualified to direct his inclinations and endeavours towards the attaining his own pleasure, in *conjunction* with, and in *subordination* to the common happiness, or to direct these in distinction from, and in opposition to the *common felicity*; and, in the *free exercise* of this power, he becomes either virtuous or vicious. For, tho' every man will be disposed, from the nature of the thing, to *prefer* happiness to misery; and tho' every man's *particular constitution* may incline him to prefer one kind of pleasure to *another*, which, I think, is all that can be urged in

in the present case; yet no man is hereby *determined* to be generous or selfish. A generous man prefers the common felicity to his own, and a selfish man prefers his own to the publick; a generous man prefers one kind of pleasure to another, but *denies himself* in both, when his own, and the common happiness, come in competition; a selfish man likewise prefers one kind of pleasure to another, and he *indulges himself* in both, tho' they are inconsistent with, and destructive of the common good. And the ground of this difference, *viz.* that one man is generous or virtuous, and another man is selfish or vicious, does not arise from the natural difference in things; for then all men would be virtuous or vicious alike; nor yet from an inclination, arising from every man's particular constitution, to prefer one kind of pleasure to another, that being equally the case both of virtuous and vicious men; but it arises plainly from that *power, or liberty*, which takes place in every man, to *direct or restrain* his inclinations and endeavours, either one way or the other.

If it should be farther urged, allowing that virtue and vice are the subjects of mens free choice, as the term *free* is opposed to *necessity*; yet they are not free with regard to every thing which may *influence or bias* them in that choice; seeing their natural constitution very *strongly disposes* them to vice; by which means, vice has much the advantage of virtue, and it is great odds but men will be vicious, they being so strongly inclined, by their *natural* appetites and affections to chuse it rather than virtue. To this it may be answered, men are generally too hasty in their *censures of nature*. That we have appetites and affections is beyond dispute; but that these, as they are of nature's providing, *dispose and incline us to vice*, will be denied; yea, our natu-  
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ral constitution, upon the *whole*, is so far from disposing us to vice, that on the contrary it is an excitement to virtue. Man is a compound creature who is fitly constituted to answer the purposes of *social felicity*; his appetites and passions dispose him to *promote* and *secure* the publick good; his understanding qualifies him to *discern* betwixt right and wrong, good and evil; and consequently, to judge of the *fitness* or *unfitness* of his actions, with relation to that end. And he is endowed with *power*, to guide his behaviour as his *judgment* shall direct; and when the harmony of this composition is preserved, then man is an *agreeable* and *useful*, or, in other words, a virtuous creature. It is true, man is capable of being the contrary; all his appetites and passions are capable of being *vitiating*, that is, of being indulged beyond their due bounds; by which indulgence, the *harmony* of that composition is disturbed, evil is *introduced*, and man becomes, in many instances, a *disagreeable* and *hurtful*, or, in other words, a vicious creature. But then, it ought to be remembered, that his conduct, upon the whole, is *unnatural*, seeing his composition *taken together* disposes him to the contrary. This, I imagine, will appear more plainly to be the case, when I have examin'd two or three branches of human affection, which are the *chief occasions* of evil.

*Self-love* (which unhappily proves introductive to much vice) was rightly planted in human nature, by the great Author of our being, to dispose us to do all that is necessary for our support and preservation, and to guard against every danger, to which we are exposed. But then there are other passions planted in us, *viz. sympathy, pity, and compassion*, which dispose us to enter into the concerns of our fellow-creatures, and to do.

do what is necessary to make them happy. And, as these different affections were designed for a *balance* to, and a *constant check* upon each other; and as the directing each, and every of these to their *proper* objects, and keeping them within *due bounds*, not indulging one to the depressing of another, is properly our *natural state*; and as *reason* joins issue, and shews us that it is as fit, in the nature of things, that all others should be happy, as that we should be so, and thereby convinces us of the *fitness* of our endeavours in prosecuting the happiness of others, as well as our own; so this shews plainly, that our composition, taken together, is so far from *inclining* us to *vice*, that on the contrary it *disposes* us to *virtue*; and that, when self-love becomes the *occasion* of *evil*, it is not by our following nature, but by perverting it.

Thus again, the affectionate concern we have for the happiness and welfare of our *children* and *kindred* (a passion which possibly occasions more vice in the world than any other branch of our composition) was rightly and wisely planted in human nature, to point out to us who they are, upon whom we are *first* to exercise our *care* and *kindness*. For as our power of doing good is limited, by which means we are incapable of serving all who need assistance from others; so this affection points out to us those, who, of all others, are the *immediate* objects of our regard. We are to love, and take care of such relatives, in *distinction* from, but not in *opposition* to the rest of our *fellow-creatures*; who need our help, and who have, or would have, an equal *right* to our assistance, if we had equal power of helping all, as we have of assisting those, who are providentially made our immediate dependents. So that when love to our off-spring, and relations, is *moderated* and kept within *due bounds*, then it leads to virtue, that is,

to the promoting the common happiness; but when this affection is so *indulged*, as that it depresses our *pity* and *compassion* to the rest of our fellow-creatures, and thereby *prevents* us from doing that good to others, which their necessity calls for, and our ability enables us to do; in these cases, the affection is vitiated, and becomes the *occasion* of much evil. But then it ought to be remembered, that this evil is not *justly chargeable* upon nature, but upon its perversion and abuse.

The like may be said, with regard to *love* to our country. All that *devastation* and *misery*, which has been, at any time, introduced by this branch of human affection, did not spring from the natural use, but from the perversion and abuse of it. When love to our country is moderated, and kept within due bounds, that is, when it disposes us to guard against all approaches to *arbitrary power*, and every thing by which the *commonwealth* is in danger of suffering; and when we love, and do good to our country, in *distinction* from, but not in *opposition* to other countries, which would have an equal *right* to our regard, if we had equal power of helping all, as we have of assisting our own, then love to our country is a *virtue*. But if we indulge the passion beyond its due bounds, and love our country in *opposition* to other countries, so as to do them *hurt* and *damage*, in order to promote the *interest*, and raise the *glory* of our own; or if we neglect other countries, when it is in our power to serve our own, and them also; in these cases, the proper use of the affection is *perverted*, and love to our country is *evil* and *vicious*; there being as much reason, that those people should be happy who live upon any other part of the globe, as that they should be so, who live upon the same spot of earth with us,

As far as the *old Romans* love to their country was rightly directed and applied as above; so far it was *virtuous*, and worthy of our *praise* and *imitation*. But, if love to their country led them, at any time, to *impoverish*, *enslave*, or *lay waste* other countries, in order to promote the *interest*, or raise the *grandeur* of their own; or if it *prevented* them from helping other countries, when it was in their power to serve their own, and them also; so far love to their country was *vicious*, and worthy of our *biggest contempt*.

The case is the same, with regard to all the *appetites* and *affections* planted in human nature. These were rightly and wisely placed in us, by the great Author of our being, for the propagation of our species, for the preservation of ourselves and others, and for the serving such other purposes as are necessary to promote and secure the common happiness. And when any of these become the occasion of vice, or moral evil, it arises not from the natural use, but from the perversion and abuse of them. From what I have observed, I think, it plainly appears, that *nature*, and consequently that the *God* of *nature*, is not justly chargeable with that *moral evil*, which is occasioned by the appetites and passions which take place in, and in part constitute human nature. It is true, God might, if he pleased, have prevented this kind of evil; but then he would have prevented himself from making such creatures as we are, and from bestowing on us those excellent and valuable gifts, by which we are rendered capable of making ourselves the suitable and proper objects of his approbation and affection; and of receiving from him such farther favours as his wisdom and goodness may dispose him to bestow upon us. In *fine*, I think, I may venture to say, that the *evil* which takes place in the world, whe-



ther natural or moral, will not afford an argument *against*, or in *prejudice* of the grand point I have been defending; *namely*, that God is in reality a *wise*, and a *good Being*, &c.

Thus, Sir, I have endeavoured to vindicate God's *moral character*, as to the *cause* and *origin* of evil; the point which you say your doubt has arisen from. And tho' I may not have entered into every question, which so *nice* and so *general* a subject may be liable to; yet, I think, I have laid down such *principles*, from whence the true answer to those questions may be gathered. I leave it to your consideration, wishing that it may give you satisfaction; and proceed,

*Thirdly*, and *lastly*, To improve the whole to serve the purposes of *virtue* and *true goodness*, by representing to my reader, what it is, which will render him truly *lovely* and *valuable* in himself, and truly *acceptable* and *well-pleasing* to God. And,

*First*, I am to represent to my reader, what it is which will render him truly lovely and valuable in himself; or what it is which constitutes a *good* and *virtuous character*. Man (as I have already observed) is a creature excellently constituted, to answer all the purposes of *social felicity*, and to promote and carry on a *common happiness*. All his appetites and affections, when rightly directed, and kept in due bounds, lead to this end; his understanding likewise shews him the fitness of a common good, and the intrinsic excellency and valuableness of pursuing it. So that, when the *harmony* of this composition is preserved, that is, when each appetite and passion is kept in due bounds; one not indulged to the depressing of another, and all, by the direction of the understanding, made subservient to the *common good*; then it is, that he is an *agreeable*, and *useful*, or, in other words, a *virtuous* and a *lovely creature*.

I say,

I say, when a man has a true concern, and a hearty endeavour to promote the happiness and well-being of the rest of his fellow-creatures, and, in consequence of which, he renders himself both agreeable and useful to all around him, and introduces as much *happiness* into the creation as he can; then it is that he answers the character of a *good* and *virtuous* man. That which makes God to be a *good Being* is his doing good for *goodness* sake, his exercising his natural properties to serve the purposes of *benevolence*; his calling a multitude of creatures into being, on purpose to communicate *happiness* to them; and his wise and kind provision of all things necessary to make them so; this is what renders *God* truly lovely and valuable. As for his boundless power and knowledge, his immensity, eternity, and the like; tho' these may lay a foundation for *admiration* and *reverence*, yet these alone do not render him an agreeable object. But when all his natural properties are influenced and directed by his wisdom and goodness, this is what renders him *altogether* lovely, and the *perfection* of *beauty*. And, as this is what makes God truly valuable; so it is this, and this only, which can make *men* so. When they are animated by such a spirit and principle of *true goodness*, as disposes them to study and prosecute the happiness of their fellow-creatures, as far as it is in their power, by removing every *uneasiness*, and every *impediment* to their comfort and felicity; and by giving all that kind *assistance* and *protection*, which is necessary to make life pleasant and delightful; when they render themselves both agreeable and useful to their relations, servants, neighbours, and to all those among whom they live, or who are any-ways capable of their help, then they answer that noble character of being *good* and *virtuous*, and are more or less so, as

they more or less desire and endeavour after the happiness and well-being of others.

Men are very apt to *deceive* themselves, and too often *impose* upon others, by making that the ground of this valuable character, which does not, in the nature of the thing, entitle them to it. Thus, some men think that *severe mortifications*, and *denying themselves* those things which God hath kindly provided for our enjoyment, denominate a man to be good and virtuous. Others value themselves for the *orthodoxy* of their opinions, their *zeal* for this or that scheme of religion; their being engaged in this or that *party*; their diligence in *propagating* what they esteem truth, and their patience and constancy in *suffering* for it. Others think that *constancy* and *seriousness* in reading and hearing the word of God, attending upon *divine ordinances*, and the like, are what constitute a good and virtuous character; whereas all these may take place in the same person, and yet he may not have any thing of virtue or goodness in him; because, notwithstanding these, he may be destitute of what is truly valuable, *viz.* that temper and behaviour, before-mentioned. Yea, a man may abound in these, and yet be exceedingly vicious, by his *monopolizing* the blessings and comforts of life to himself, and by his contributing much to the misery and unhappiness of others. But, that which men are in the greatest danger of being deceived by, in this case, is, when they are *sober* and *temperate* in their enjoyments, *quiet* and *peaceable* among their neighbours, *true* and *faithful* in their covenants and promises, strictly *just* in answering every legal demand, and the like; these are esteemed great virtues, whereas in reality they are not so; a man may have all these, and yet not be a good man; because he may

want



want the spirit, and practice of true goodness, which is *essential* to a good and virtuous character. The former constitutes but a *negative* character, viz. not an evil man, that is, the man in whom the abovementioned qualities reside, may be said *not to do evil*. But, alas! there is a wide difference betwixt not doing evil and *doing good*; the latter being a *positive* character which can arise from nothing less, than the love and practice of *virtue* and *true goodness*, as above described. St. Paul's remark is very much to my present purpose, *Rom. v. 7.* he saith, *Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.* The Apostle here distinguishes betwixt a *righteous man*, and a *good man*; and he observes, with regard to the former, who by his just behaviour, in answering every legal demand, had entitled himself to the character of a *righteous man*, for *such a man* one would scarce die; his life had nothing valuable in it, to render it *worthy* of such a ransom; for tho' he did no evil, yet as he did no good, he was but a cypher in the creation. But then the Apostle observes, with regard to the latter, who by his doing good to all around him, and who by communicating his kind assistance and protection to all that stood in need of his help, had entitled himself to the character of a *good man*; that tho' life is exceeding dear to every man, yet for *such a one*, some would even dare to die. His life was of such consequence to the good and happiness of mankind; that some would even venture to *ransom* it with the *loss* of their own. Would we then be valuable creatures? and would we deserve the character of good men? let us put on the spirit of virtue and true goodness, and that will most certainly entitle us to it. But to proceed,



Secondly, I am to represent to my reader, what it is which constitutes *true religion*; or what it is he must be and do to render himself truly acceptable and well-pleasing to God. And here, I think, I have no great difficulty upon my hands; because this is what lies open to the view of every man. We need not run from sect to sect, nor from one religious teacher to another; we need not ransack history, nor be at the tedious search of examining all the evidence which every missionary offers, to prove his message to be divine; nor turn over all the numberless volumes which have been written by each religious party, to prove or explain what they call the word of God. No, *the word* (to speak in the language of St. Paul) *is nigh us, even in our mouth, and in our heart.* It is but to exercise that *reasoning* capacity which is lodged in the bosom of every man; and this will enable us to discover, with *ease* and *certainly*, what we must be and do to please God. If I was to serve a master, whom I knew to be of a covetous temper of mind, who made his *worldly interest* the rule and measure of his actions, in such a case, I should not need a teacher to inform me what I must do to please him; this the nature of the thing would easily discover. If I could bend my mind to his avaritious temper, and could lay out myself in prosecuting his worldly interest to the utmost of my power, then I might know that my service would be acceptable to him. In like manner, when we know that God is in reality a *wise* and *good Being*, &c. then we cannot be at a loss to know what we must be and do to please him. The nature of the thing shews us plainly, that if we have the *same temper of mind*, and govern our actions by the *same rule as God does*, then we shall not fail of his favour; *it being* morally impossible, that it should be otherwise.

otherwise. Heaven and earth may fail and pass away, but God will not fail of *loving* and *approving* such creatures, and of *disapproving* their contraries. Would we then propose the question, *viz.* wherein consists true religion? and would we seek for satisfaction in a way in which we might be certain not to mistake? Let us take a view of our Creator, when consider'd in his *moral* capacity, and let us turn our thoughts upon ourselves, and examine what sort of creatures we are, how we are *constituted* and *circumstanced*, and how we stand naturally *related* to God, and to our fellow-creatures; and then we may discover, with ease and certainty, what it is which God expects from us, and which will make us *approvable* in his sight.

Are we derived dependent beings, endowed with a reasoning capacity to *direct* and *guide* our behaviour, owing ourselves, and all that we are or have, to that best of beings, who is our *Creator*, and *original benefactor*? this we cannot but know, if we exercise our reasoning capacity; and then we cannot but know likewise, that it is *meet*, *right*, and our *bounden duty*, upon all proper occasions, to awaken in ourselves, and stir up in others, a due and a suitable sense of our Creator, of his kind intentions towards us, and of the many favours we have received at his hand, and with a sincere affection offer up to him our humble and thankful acknowledgments. Again, are we social creatures, endowed with a reasoning capacity, whom nature hath fitted to give and receive all that *kind assistance* and *protection* to, and from each other, that each other's circumstances and abilities make necessary and call for? Which surely we cannot but know, if we turn our *thoughts upon ourselves*, and upon the rest of *our fellow-creatures*; and then we cannot but

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know

know likewise, that it is *right* and *fit*, in the nature of the thing, that we should introduce as much happiness into the creation as we can, by rendering ourselves the most *agreeable* and the most *useful* members of society, that we are capable of being. We cannot but know, if we reflect, that when we live under a suitable sense of the *divine kindness*, and pay our acknowledgments to God, in a way which is most expressive of his *excellency* and *goodness*; and when, by an humble, meek, affable, and courteous behaviour, we have rendered ourselves agreeable to all around us; and by the exercise of love and pity, and a kind assistance, we have removed the *uneasiness*, and contributed to the *happiness* of our fellow-creatures, as far as it had been in our power: I say, as we cannot but know, that such a temper and conduct is *highly valuable* in itself, and *becoming* us as men; so we cannot but know, that it will render us truly *acceptable* and *well-pleasing* to God. This, in short, is true religion. This is filling up that relation we stand in to God and to our fellow-creatures, and answering the wise and good purpose of our Creator, in calling us into being. And therefore it is this, and this only, which, in the nature of the thing, can, and will render us approveable in his sight. This is what approves itself to the understanding of all men; and yet it is thought by some, that there is not any thing more difficult to *discover*, nor represented as more *mysterious*, than true religion; tho' by the way, this reflects *dishonour* upon the *divine conduct*, as if God had made the way to his favour so exceeding *difficult*, that none but men of *letters* and *large abilities* could discover it; and had left the rest of mankind in their hands, to guide them right or wrong, as they please, in a matter of such importance.

If true religion was a *precarious* thing, and founded upon the arbitrary will of God, then indeed, as nothing but a *revelation* of that will could discover it; so it might be delivered in such a way, as to leave room for *dispute*, and men might be under perpetual doubts and fears about it. And the most that could be done, in such a case, would be a *diligent* and *sincere* endeavour to know the divine will, and an *honest practising* what, upon such enquiry, appeared to be so; and then to trust to the *mercy* and *goodness* of its Author for acceptance, tho' even such a conduct could not afford a proper foundation for *comfort* and *satisfaction*; because the wisest and best behaviour may not prevail for acceptance with a being, whose actions are not directed by the moral fitness of things, but by arbitrary pleasure; at least, we can have no assurance that it will. But this is by no means the case; true religion, or that duty we owe to our Creator and to our fellow-creatures, and which is the ground of divine acceptance, being nothing else, but the *acting agreeably* to that relation we stand in to God and to each other; the obligation to which arises not from an arbitrary command, but from the moral fitness of things.

Would we then be truly religious? that is, would we find favour and acceptance with our Maker? this is the only and the certain way to it, *viz.* to put on such a *temper of mind*, and such a *behaviour* as becomes us as men; and then we shall most certainly find *favour* with God. There is not any thing but *agreeableness* in the subject, which can possibly make it the object of divine favour. For tho' men, from a mistaken judgment, or from vitiated affections, may be led to love that which is the proper object of their hatred, and dislike that, which, in the nature of the thing, is the proper object of their *approbation*; yet this cannot be the case, with re-  
spect



pect to God; because, as his understanding cannot be *mis-led*, so there is not any thing in nature, which can possibly *vitate* his affections. And if this be the case, then certainly it becomes us all to put on such a *loveliness*, that is, such an agreeable useful temper and conduct, as will, in the nature of the thing, render us truly *amiable* and *lovely* in the eyes of our Maker; and not to flatter ourselves that we are sharers in divine love, whilst our disagreeable tempers and actions render us the proper objects of divine displeasure. Let us not then deceive ourselves in a matter of such importance, by making that the ground of divine acceptance, which does not, in the nature of the thing, entitle us to it. It is not a *strong assent* to the truth of a proposition, built upon a *divine testimony*; nor a *constant* and *serious* attendance upon ceremonies, tho' of *divine* appointment; nor the being *united* to this, or that religious party, much less an *angry* and *bitter* zeal, spent in defending and propagating the opinions we embrace, or the party we are united to: I say, it is not these which can possibly render us *agreeable* to such a wise and good Being as God is. That, in the nature of the thing, must arise from the agreeableness of our *tempers* and *actions*, considering our frame and composition. Neither will God be any ways *bribed* into a liking and approbation of us, whilst, in our tempers and actions, we continue to be disagreeable. It is not the offering to him *thousands of rams*, nor *ten thousands of rivers of oil*, nor the *watchings* and *fastings*, the *prayers* and *tears* of a man's self, nor the *labours*, nor *sufferings*, nor the *intreaties* of another in his behalf, which can possibly render a disagreeable creature pleasing to, and acceptable to his Maker. For tho' men's affections may be *bribed* or *betrayed*; yet surely this cannot be the case, with respect to  
 God

God, who is set far above every *weakness* of every kind; and consequently there is not any thing but *personal virtuousness*, which can secure to a man the divine favour. The sum of the matter is this. Man is an intelligent free agent, excellently constituted for social felicity, as I have before shewn; and when, under a grateful sense of divine kindness, he studies to imitate his Maker, in communicating happiness to all, as far as it is in his power, by rendering himself agreeable and useful to the rest of his fellow-creatures; and by endeavouring to make them happy, as well as himself; then it is that he commences a *lovely creature*, and must *approve* himself to God. And the more or less he is of this, or of the contrary, the more or less he is *lovely* or *disagreeable* to his Maker. But,

Possibly it may be urged, that the principles, I have laid down, are inconsistent with *divine revelation*, and destructive of all *revealed religion*, and the like. To which it may be answered, that it is not so. I have only been shewing what it is, in the nature of the thing, that will certainly recommend men to *God's favour*. To which I here add, that the business of divine revelation is not to make or constitute duty, but to *declare* it; and to propose such arguments and motives, as are proper to reduce men to, and engage them in the *love and practice* of it. If men had followed nature, and acted upon reason, according to our Saviour's just remark, then there had been no need of revelation. *They that are whole* (said he) *have no need of the physician*, (and consequently have no need of physick) *but they that are sick*. *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*, Mark ii. 17. But, such has been the misfortune of the generality of mankind, that partly by a *wrong education*, and partly by other ca-  
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ses, their original constitutions have been depraved, that is, their understandings have been *mis-led*, and their appetites and affections *vitiated*; and they have been so far from making the moral fitness of things the rule and measure of their actions, that, on the contrary, they have suffered themselves to be governed by *humour, private interest*, and the like; and have easily submitted to the arbitrary commands of every one, who has declared himself a *heavenly messenger*; insomuch that cruel and hurtful, as well as childish and trifling superstitions, have been zealously contended for as true religion. And, that this has been the state of the *religious world*, I presume will not be denied. The proper question then, arising from hence, will be (taking in the state and condition of mankind) Whether there is a *moral fitness* or *unfitness* in God's interposing to discover to his creatures such rules of action, as are suitable to, and becoming their rational and manly nature; and to represent to them the certain consequences of a good or bad life, with regard to his favour or displeasure? I say, the proper question is, Whether there is a moral fitness or unfitness in God's interposing, as aforesaid? If there is a *moral unfitness* in such a conduct, then I allow the consequence, *viz.* that no *divine revelation* can possibly take place upon my principles. But on the other side, if there is a *moral fitness* in God's interposing to give a revelation to his creatures, then, I say, the principles, I have laid down, are so far from being *prejudicial* to divine revelation, that, on the contrary, they afford the most *conclusive* argument for it.

If it should be farther urged, allowing the foregoing principles are consistent with divine revelation; yet they must conclude against all *positive institutions* which have no moral fitness in



in them, but are founded on the arbitrary command of the Almighty. Before I reply, I beg leave to repeat what I have already observed in the *supplement* to my *previous question*, namely, “that  
 “ in order to judge aright of the moral fitness or  
 “ unfitness of any action, every circumstance  
 “ and consequence, which stands related to it,  
 “ must be taken into the case; because the fitness  
 “ or unfitness of an action arises from the good or  
 “ bad purposes it is subservient to. And these  
 “ oftentimes arise from the different circumstances the action is performed under; so that the  
 “ same action may be fit under some circumstances, and unfit under others.” Again, I *observe*, experience shews, that the generality of mankind are *disposed* to, and much *affected* with ceremony and external observances; which, like words serve to *excite* and *express*, not only the conceptions, but the passions of the mind: and these they may make use of not only in their ordinary intercourse with each other, but also in their *solemn addresses* and *applications* to God: and men vary in the use of these, some using one, some another, some applying to them one signification, some another, according to the different usages or opinions of the ages or countries in which men live, or the different religious parties they are joined with, or the different ways of thinking, which by their education, or some other accident, they have been led into. Again, I *observe*, that as ceremonies are sometimes *subservient* to men's good, by leading them to *proper reflections*, and by exciting in them *good affections*; so they are more frequently subservient to the contrary, by bringing men under the yoke of *burdensome* and *hurtful superstitions*; by occasioning in them a *bitter zeal* against their fellow-creatures, when their opinions and practice, with respect to these, run cross to each other,



other, and by *misleading* them with regard to *true religion*; men's attendance on, and zeal for ceremonies, being frequently put in the place of virtue and made the *ground* of divine acceptance. These things being premised,

I answer, The proper question, in this case, will be, ( taking in the state of mankind, ) how much they are *disposed* to external observances, and how *liable* they are to make a *bad use* of them. I say, the question is, when all circumstances and consequences are taken into the case, whether it is *morally fit* or *unfit* for God to interpose, by appointing some ceremonies (which are least burdensome as the marks of our respect to him; to preserve peace and unity amongst mankind, to lead us to virtue, and to prevent our running into more burdensome and hurtful superstitions? So that, before any consequence can be fairly drawn from the principles I have laid down, either for or against divine revelation, or positive institutions, this point must first be cleared, *viz.* that it is either morally fit, or unfit, for God to interpose in the case referred to. Upon the whole I *observe* that God does not *command* for *commanding sake*, or by way of *tax* upon his creatures; but, on the contrary, all his commands and institutions are intended for our good. And it is when that end is answered, that they become *useful* to us, and we become *acceptable* to God: and therefore the bare compliance with, yea the most fervent zeal for *ceremonies* and *divine institutions*, when separated from the love and practice of virtue, cannot make us the proper objects of divine regard. This is evident from the nature of the thing, to which I shall add the following testimonies.

*Micah vi. 6, 7, 8. Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of*

a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewn thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? *Isaiah i. 11—17.* To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me, saith the Lord? I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and of the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination unto me, the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies I cannot away with, it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons, and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them. And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; and when you make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. In fine, divine revelation must, when rightly understood, be consistent with nature; and consequently, what I have fairly deduced, from the reason of things, cannot be prejudicial to it, nor to revealed religion founded upon it.

Thus I have gone thro' what I proposed. I shall now close up this subject with the following remark; namely, that as having *right notions* of the deity, when consider'd in his moral capacity, is the ground and foundation of all *true religion*; so the having a *wrong* and *unworthy* idea of God, when consider'd in that same capacity, is the foundation of all *religious superstition*, whether exercised

in men's passions or actions. For as religious superstition, with regard to our passions, consists in exercising our *hopes* and *fears*, with respect to God when there is no just ground for the exercise of them; so those hopes and fears naturally spring from a *false notion* of the deity, with regard to his moral character. When we suppose such a *temper of mind* in our Creator as he is a stranger to, and when we consider him as governing his actions by such *rules* as he is the farthest from; as such an unworthy conception of God will naturally alarm our *passions*, so all those hopes and fears which arise from, and are founded upon it, will be exceedingly *superstitious* and *groundless*. The case is the same, with respect to men's actions. For when they have formed in their minds a wrong and unworthy idea of God, with regard to the moral rectitude of his nature, then they are *superstitiously* led upon that account to do many things as *duty*, and to avoid many other as *sins*, when there is no *just ground* nor foundation for either. And the more gross and unworthy men's conceptions of God are in this respect, the more *gross* and *vile* will that superstition be, which is produced by it. When men consider God as an *absolute Sovereign*, whose actions are directed not by the fitness of things, but by the arbitrary pleasure, and that he will respect men more for the *orthodoxy* of their opinions, or for their *attendance* on, and *zeal* for this or that ceremony, and the like, than for the *sweetness* of their tempers, or the *virtuousness* of their lives; and that he hates and will punish men for their *innocent mistakes* concerning himself, or the service they are to pay to him; as such an opinion is very wrong in itself, and dishonourable to the deity, so men are easily and naturally led, by it, to think that *religious persecution* is pleasing to God; this being (in  
their

their way of thinking) a conformity to the *divine pattern*, in hating and punishing those, whom they think God hates and will punish. And thus a false and unworthy opinion of the deity, with regard to his moral character, will lead men to actions which are most *injurious* to mankind, and most *dishonourable* and *hateful* to God.

Our Saviour said to his Disciples, as in *John* xvi. 2, 3. *They (viz. the Jews) shall put you out of the synagogues; yea the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.* In these words our Lord observes, that men's religious superstition would lead them to the killing of God's servants, out of zeal for his honour. He likewise observes, that the ground of this superstitious zeal is their *ignorance* and *false notions* of the deity; which ignorance must relate to him, with regard to his moral character. The *Jews* ignorance of God could not relate to his natural character; because they had as *just ideas* of him in that respect, as the christians. Neither could their ignorance of this kind (supposing they had been justly chargeable) be productive of such *barbarities* as our Lord said they would be guilty of. A wrong opinion of God's natural properties, his personality, and the like, cannot, in the nature of the thing, lay a foundation for thinking that religious persecution is *pleasing to God*; and consequently cannot have any such influence upon men's *tempers* and *actions*, as was the case, with respect to the *Jews* before-mentioned. These *Jews* considered God as an absolute sovereign, the ground of whose favour or displeasure is not the personal virtuousness or viciousness of his creatures, but their submitting or not submitting to what he *arbitrarily* makes the conditions of his acceptance. They likewise con-



sidered themselves as those who had the good fortune to be singled out for *divine love*? that God had, from mere sovereign pleasure, made them *his people*; that he had given them the only and the certain conditions of his *favour*, and that he had excluded the rest of mankind from any share in his affections. And as these were the unworthy ideas they had of God and of his conduct; so they were very easily led to conclude from them, that the *afflicting* and *grieving*, and even *killing* those whom they presumed God had prepared for destruction, would be a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing to him. *The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.*

I will only add, that to know, or have a just idea of God, with regard to his moral character, is the *most noble* and the *most useful knowledge*, which the mind of man can be furnished with. To know God in his natural capacity, that is, to know him, with regard to his metaphysical nature or essence, his personality, his natural properties, such as necessary existence, immensity, and the like; such knowledge may make us *good philosophers*, and that is the most it can possibly do. But to know God in his moral capacity, this may make us *good men*, as it is capable of having a powerful influence upon our minds and lives, by disposing us to model them after the *divine pattern*, and to render ourselves the *suitable* and *proper* objects of his approbation and affection.

*I am, Sir,  
Your Obliged  
Humble Servant, &c.*

TRACT

TRACT XXI.  
A  
SUPPLEMENT  
TO THE

*Vindication of God's Moral Character.*

Wherein three Objections are examined; two urged against the Wisdom and Goodness of God, and the other against human Liberty.

IT being thought by some, that, in my Vindication of God's Moral Character, I have not so *fully vindicated the divine conduct*, as might have been expected from a performance of that kind; I think it proper to offer what follows, by way of *answer* to what has been urged on this head. And, to make way for a difficulty in the present case, the following principles are laid down, *viz. first*, that God perfectly foreknows in what instances, and to what degree, every man will be virtuous or vicious, before his formation or conception. *Secondly*, that there are some persons, who, in fact, prove to be exceedingly vicious, by their being guilty of a great deal of *moral evil*, with respect to themselves, and thereby introduce a great deal of natural evil, or *unhappiness*, upon others. And, *thirdly*, that as there are some *actions* necessary to human formation or conception; so there are a multitude of those action which take place, and yet no con-

ception follows. These things being premised, from hence it is argued, that either God does *immediately interpose*, and by his particular providence render all those actions successful upon which human conception depends, in all those instances wherein conception does follow or accompany such actions; or else he *does not interpose*, but leaves that affair to be conducted by those laws by which the natural world is governed. If the *first* is the case, then it would be an instance of *wisdom* and *goodness* for God *not* to interpose in all those cases upon which the lives of all vicious persons depend, and thereby to prevent the existence of such persons; whereas, by his interposing, he does manifestly occasion a multitude of evil. But, if the latter be the case, then it would be an instance of *wisdom* and *goodness* for God to *interpose*, and by his particular providence render the conception of all vicious persons *abortive*; whereas, his forbearing to do this is a manifest instance of the contrary.

With respect to the *first* branch of the objection, it is sufficient to answer, that God *does not* interpose, as aforesaid, to render those actions successful upon which human conception depends; conception being as much the *produce of*, and under the direction of the *laws of nature*, as any other branch of this system of things; and those laws are as *exactly complied with* and followed in all those instances in which conception does, as in those instances in which it does not follow or accompany such actions.

With respect to the latter part of the objection, the answer is, that if it would be an instance of *wisdom* and *goodness* for God thus immediately *to interpose*, and thereby to prevent evil, by preventing the existence of all vicious persons, then it *would be a like* instance of wisdom and goodness  
for

for him immediately to interpose and prevent every *shipwreck* every *injurious fire*, yea, every *evil* of every kind. The consequence of which would be the constance *suspending* of those laws by which the natural world is governed. So that the objection, in its last result, amounts to this, *namely*, that it would have been an instance of wisdom and goodness for God *not* to have given being to this world. But this objection cannot be of weight, except it can be made appear that there has been *more unhappiness* than *happiness* introduced by it.

If it should be further urged, that tho' things cannot be otherwise than they are in this respect, in the present state of things; yet God might, if he had pleased, have *prevented* the existence of all vicious persons, by giving such laws to the natural world, as would have introduced none but persons of *virtue* and *honour*: I *answer*, that vice is not occasioned by any *defect* in the law of nature; but, on the contrary, it arises from that *liberty* and freedom of action which takes place in every *moral agent*. The \*human composition is excellently constituted to serve the purposes of virtue and true goodness; and, upon the whole, tends to render man an *agreeable* and a *useful* creature. But then, as man is a moral agent, he must be at liberty to *direct* or *restrain* his inclinations and endeavours, either to serve the purposes of virtue, or the contrary; so that when vice takes place, this is so far from being the produce of the laws of nature, that, on the contrary, it is the *perversion* and *abuse* of those laws; and such abuse is the subject of every man's *free choice*. So that to say, God might have given such laws as would have prevented this evil, is the same as to say that he might have prevented our *agencies*.

\* See my *Vindication of God's Moral Character*.



Besides, this objection is founded upon a supposition, that God *foreknows* in what instances, and to what degree, every man will be either virtuous or vicious, before his formation or conception. But this is only *presumed*, and not proved; and therefore as the *strength* of the objection chiefly depends upon the *truth* of this supposition, so, till this point is *proved*, the objection cannot be of any weight. Again,

*Secondly*, It is urged, that whereas all the *moral*, and a great part of the *natural evil* which is in the world, is occasioned by that *liberty* and freedom of action which takes place in man; and, whereas God *foreknew* that man would *abuse* that liberty, and that he will be *severely punished* in another world for that abuse; therefore liberty, upon the whole, is a *curse* and not a blessing; it being better for man not to have this *power*, than to have it, and be *liable* to abuse it; and, consequently, as the *with-holding* this gift from man would have been an instance of wisdom and goodness, so the making man a *free creature* is a manifest instance of the contrary.

*I answer, first*, Whether God does or does not absolutely foreknow the actions of men is a disputable point, which, I think, cannot be *absolutely determined* on either side; and therefore the divine prescience ought not to be brought into the case; because, to argue from thence is to draw conclusions from *uncertain* principles. And as to the punishment which will be inflicted on vicious men in another world, this will be done in a way perfectly *consistent* with divine wisdom and goodness. And whereas, in the objection, man is supposed capable of *existing*, and enjoying the *pleasures* he now tastes, tho' *destitute* of liberty; and that God might have *given* or *with-held* this power from him as he pleased; this, I think, is  
a wrong

a *strong* representation of the case; because liberty is *absolutely necessary* to constitute such a creature as man, and to render him *capable* of those pleasures he now enjoys. The pleasures with which man is here entertained, whether sensual, intellectual, or moral, suppose him possessed of the faculties of *intelligence* and *activity*, to render him capable of those pleasures. So that where these faculties are wanting, as in *stones, trees*, and the like, there is an utter *incapacity* for the enjoyment of those pleasures; and if *agency* is necessary to render a creature capable of tasting the pleasures which this globe affords, then *liberty* is necessary; because, strictly speaking, *agency* and *liberty* are the same thing. So that the question will be at last resolved into this, *namely*, whether it be *consistent* with, or rather, whether it be an *instance* of wisdom and goodness, or of the contrary, for God to call such a creature as *man* into being. To which I answer,

*Secondly*, That man, as a free creature, comes under a two-fold consideration, *viz.* *first*, as a species of beings, who stand related to the rest of the *animal world*; and, in the exercise of their liberty, are the *occasion* of both evil and good to them. And, *secondly*, as a species of beings, who, in the exercise of their liberty, are *introductive* of both evil and good to *each other*. If we consider man, as he stands related to the rest of the animal world, in this view the *wisdom* and *goodness* of God are abundantly displayed; because man, in the exercise of his liberty, is *introductive* of much more *happiness* to the animals below him, than the contrary. For tho' some particular *animals*, or some particular *species* of them, may receive *more evil* than good from the hands of men; yet this is by no means the case, with respect to the animal world in general. It is by

man's *labour* and *industry* that the earth is cultivated and improved, by which means yeild a plentiful increase for their use. It is man who watches the seasons, and gathers in the summer to preserve them in the winter, and makes that provision for them which they are by no means capable of doing for themselves. So that, thro' the care and industry of man, multitudes are called into being, which otherwise would have no existence. And as to those that would have existed, the lives of multitudes of them are rendered *more happy*, and their deaths *less affective* than otherwise they would have been. This, I think, will appear to be the case, if we consider the species of mankind, as *seperated* from this globe; so that, I think, it may be truly said that man is a *blessing*, or an instance of divine goodness to the *animal world*. Again, if we consider man as a species of beings who stand related to, and in the exercise of their liberty are the cause of both evil and good to each other; in this view also, the producing of man into being will appear to be an instance of divine *wisdom* and *goodness*. Man, in his natural composition, is not only *capable* of happiness, but he is likewise excellently constituted to promote and carry on the *common happiness* of his kind. So that the wisdom and goodness of God are abundantly shewn in the human *make* and *constitution*; and tho' man is capable of *vitiating* his nature, and *abusing* his liberty, and thereby brings unhappiness upon himself and others of his species; yet, I think, this ought not to be a *bar* to his existence, because, upon the whole, the evil introduced by the abuse of man's liberty is by no means equal to the good introduced by a right use of it.

It is true, that men are too apt to abuse their liberty, to serve the purposes of *vice* and *wickedness*, and that there are *some persons* and *some places*, and perhaps

perhaps *some seasons*, in which vice runs much higher than in others. But as to the *generality* of men and of *their actions*, if the case could be fairly examined, I imagine, that virtue and happiness would appear to have much the *precedency* in them over their contraries. For tho' the instances of persons *extraordinarily virtuous* are but few, when compared with the generality of mankind; yet that is likewise the case of those who are *extraordinarily vicious*. The bulk of mankind, as their *actions* and *characters* are mixed, partly good and virtuous, and partly evil and vicious; so they abound in the *former* more than in the latter. And this, I think, would evidently appear to be the case, if men would judge impartially from their own experience herein; then, I imagine, they would be forced to confess, that they have, in the course of their lives, met with many more instances of *truth* and *honesty*, of *kindness* and *beneficence*, than of their contraries. I speak this of the generality of mankind. Men are generally more inquisitive about the *bad* than the *good* deeds of their neighbours; by which means the former of these furnishes out *materials* for conversation, much more than the latter; so that men's *good works* lie *concealed*, whilst their evil deeds are published upon the house-top. Besides, *one* vicious action (like a dead fly in the ointment of perfume) spoils a man's character, and makes all his good deeds to be *overlook*, or else looked on with an *evil eye*. Moreover, men are apt to have a much *quicker* sense of the injuries done them, than of the benefits they receive from each other. And all these give occasion for a *loud clamour*, and raise an *invincible prejudice* against our species; every one being ready to complain of the general prevalence of vice, tho' no one will allow the charge to be just, with respect to himself. If each individual



dual should be charged with having been more frequent in the practice of *falsehood* and *injustice*, of *cruelty* and *inhumanity*, than of the contrary virtues; I imagine there are but few who would plead guilty. Upon the whole, I think, there is *just ground* to presume that it would appear, if it could be tried, that mankind (bad as they are, or as their case may be represented by an artful complainer) have much more *virtue* than *vice* amongst them; and, consequently, that the calling them into being is a manifest instance of divine *wisdom* and *goodness*. And,

Tho' some men will be punished with *unspeakable misery* in another world for their *vicious* behaviour here; yet, I think, that ought not in reason to bar a *wise* and *good God* from calling our species into being; since it is much more *unreasonable* and *unkind*, on the other side, for God to *withhold* his kindness and benevolence from a species of beings, merely because some of that species will foolishly and wickedly *exclude themselves* from being sharers in it, and bring upon themselves extreme misery. Again,

*Thirdly*, It has been likewise objected, that I have not gone to the *bottom*, nor reach'd the *main difficulty* urged against *human liberty*, viz. that as *motive* in the excitement to action; so a man is as much *forced* or *compelled* to act by that excitement, as a stone is to fall to the earth, when it is thrown up into the air; because he not only *does*, but he *must* act according to the last or *final judgment* of his understanding, that is, he *will* and *must* always do what he judges *best* at the time, it being impossible for him to do otherwise.

This, I think, I have fully \* answered in the tract referred to; wherein I have shewn, that motive is not a *power* or *active cause*, but barely a *passive* reason of the action; and in which I have

\* Vindication of God's Moral Character.

likewise shewn, that a man is not under a *necessity* of doing what he judges best at the time, whether the term *best* be used to signify what is judged best upon the *whole*, or what is judged will give him the *greatest present pleasure*. The case is the same, whether the term *best* be used to signify what is best for a *man's self*, or what is best for the *publick*, or the like. In which cases, it is most evident, that no man is under a *necessity* of doing what he judges best at the time, taking the term *best* in any one respect whatever. The same person at one time, chuses to gratify a natural inclination, without entering into the *question*, whether that gratification, upon the whole, be best, or not; at another time he resolutely follows his inclination, tho' under a conviction that the gratification, upon the whole, is *wrong*; and, at another time, he chuses to deny himself that present pleasure, because he is convinced that, upon the whole, it is *evil*. And therefore to say that this person did, in all these instances, do what he judged best at the time, is to fix to the term *best* *different* and *contrary ideas*, and to introduce the utmost confusion.

If it should be farther urged, that tho' a man does not always do what he judges best at the time, supposing the term *best* be used in the same respect; yet he does always do what he judges best, using that term in one respect or other: I *answer*, admitting this to be true, yet it is not to the purpose; the being best at the time, that is, the giving the greatest present pleasure, and the being best upon the whole, these are *different* and *contrary ideas*, when they come in competition; that is, when one is an excitement to act, and the other is an excitement to the contrary; which is frequently the case. So, again, the being best for a *man's self*, and the being best for the *publick*,

lick. are different and contrary ideas, when they come in competition, as aforesaid. And therefore, as there is not any thing in the human composition which *necessarily determines* a man to prefer a present good to what is best upon the whole; to what will give him the greatest present pleasure; nor to prefer his own interest to that of the publick, nor the publick interest to his own; so from hence it will follow, that *action*, in either case, is the produce, not of *necessity*, but of *liberty*. If he prefers a present pleasure to what is best upon the whole, or if he chooses otherwise, when these come in competition, he is *voluntary* herein; he might, if he had pleased, have chose the contrary. Again, if a man prefers his own interest to that of the publick or prefers the publick to his own, in either case, it is a manifest instance of *liberty*; seeing there is not any thing in nature which necessarily determines him to be either *generous* or *selfish*. So that the giving such a latitude to the *choice* does not affect the case at all.

If it should be further urged, that when a man prefers a present good to that which is best for him, upon the whole, he then judges that best which is the subject of his present choice, or else he would not choose it: I answer, this is a mistake; for if a man chooses a present pleasure, in *opposition* to that which is best, upon the whole, when he makes the *comparison* between them; then it is impossible for him to choose the former, under the consideration of its being *best*, because it is impossible for a man to judge it best in the present case. It is not possible, in the nature of the thing, for a man to judge, that a present *momentary pleasure* is really better than a *future good*, that is vastly  
 1 a thousand time more *durable*.

1 unavoidably appear best  
 ing above the power of  
 every

every such agent to over-rule his judgment, and thereby to make himself otherwise: I say, this will unavoidably be the case, if he takes a *view* of these, and makes a *comparison* betwixt them; but if he makes no such comparison, then there is no place for the term *best* in the present question; then the present pleasures becomes a *motive* to action, not under the consideration of its being best, but under the consideration of its being a *present pleasure*. And tho' a man cannot command his judgment, and make himself think that that pleasure is really *preferable* to a vastly greater and more durable future good; yet he can command his actions; and herein consists his *liberty*, he can *give* or *deny himself* that pleasure, as he pleases.

If it should be farther urged, that in this case a man does what he judges best at the time, not as best, when compared with a greater good; but, in opposition to self-denial, he judges it better at that time to gratify his inclination than to deny it: I *answer*; that men do sometimes *prefer* a present pleasure to self-denial is allowed; but that a sense of present pleasure *compels* them to chuse it, this is denied upon good grounds, *viz.* because every act of self-denial is an *instance* of, and thereby an *evident proof* of the contrary.

If it should be urged, that, when a man denies himself, as aforesaid, he then judges self-denial best; not best, considered as self-denial, but as it leads to a greater future good: I *answer*, that to use the term *best* in so *loose* and *confused* a way, as above, sometimes making it to signify what is best in one respect; and when that will not answer the purpose, then to make it signify what is best in another respect; and when that will not do, then to tack about to the former sense of the term *best*, and so on: I say, thus to ring the changes upon the term *best* is to *play* with words, and looks more like *banter* than *argument*.      T R A C T



to render it capable of being such a rule. For if there are any propositions in the *Bible*, which when rightly understood are plainly *repugnant* to the nature or truth of things, all such propositions must be allow'd to be *false*. And if the *Bible* lays down a false proposition in one instance, and with relation to one point, then it *may* do the same in any other instance, and with relation to any other point. I say, this *may* be the case, for any thing we know to the contrary; seeing it has not given us any infallible *rule*, by which we can judge, whether the proposition referr'd to be true, or false. And consequently, if this were the case, then there could not any thing be fairly concluded from the *Bible*; and therefore it would justly be *excluded* from being the rule of truth in any point whatever.

If it should be said, that we have the use and exercise of our *understandings*, by which we discern and judge, whether the proposition laid down be true, or not: then I say, that in every such instance it is not the *Bible*, but the *evidence* arising from the *nature of things*, which is the rule of truth to us. So that if the *Bible* be admitted as the rule of truth, then the foremention'd qualification must be admitted as an *essential property* of this rule: and consequently, every proposition in the *Bible*, which in its *literal sense* is repugnant to the nature or to the truth of things, such proposition must not be understood literally, but figuratively. As thus, *Jehn vii. 38. He that believeth*

*on me ——— out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* Now I say, if the *Bible* be admitted as the rule of truth, then this proposition must be understood *figuratively*; because the terms of which it is composed, if understood literally, that is, if we apply or join those ideas which common usage has fasten'd on the proposition is plainly *repugnant*

pugnant to the nature and the truth of things.  
And,

Tho' the propositions contained in the *Bible* are partly literal and partly figurative, yet there are not every-where *land-marks* set up to point out to us, which is the one, and which is the other. Neither has it given us any certain *rule* of judging what is intended by those figures; neither is there constituted an *infallible living judge* to determine in cases of this nature. So that this is left to be discover'd by the *human understanding*; man must exercise his reasoning capacity, by a careful reflection, upon the nature of things in general, and in particular upon the subject to which the proposition relates. And from thence he must *deduce*, whether the proposition is to be understood literally or figuratively; and if figuratively, then what is intended to be set forth by those figures. And this, of course, lays a foundation for *mistakes*, seeing men are liable to understand those propositions *differently*, and to make different *applications* of those figures; and consequently, tho' the *Bible* be admitted as the rule of truth, yet it cannot, in the nature of the thing, be an *absolute security* against error. Thus, with relation to the foremention'd proposition, *He that believeth on me* (saith Christ) *out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*. I have already observed, that the terms of this proposition must be understood *figuratively*, because if we understand them literally, then the proposition is plainly repugnant to the nature and the truth of things. So that the question here will be, what is intended to be set forth by those figures. Now, tho' some men's opinion of them is as follows; *He that believeth on me*, that he who has an affecting sense of those importments which I have published to the world, *his belly shall flow rivers of living water*; that

is, this will be in him a principle of action which will bring forth plentifully the fruit of good works: I say, tho' this is some men's sense of the abovemention'd proposition, and tho' they think this is all which can be deduced from a careful reflection upon the nature of things in general, and upon the subject to which the proposition relates; yet they may mistake, because there may possibly something else be intended to be set forth by those figures. I shall not here enter into the question, what is intended by those words, *He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*; but what I observe is, that as there is no *infallible rule* of interpretation laid down in the *Bible*; and as there is not a *man*, or *body of men*, constituted to be an infallible judge of the sense of scripture; so, of course, it must be the work of the *human understanding* to do it. And this opens a wide door to error. And as no man, or body of men, is constituted an infallible judge of the sense of the *Bible*, to or for any other man, so, in the nature of the thing, one man is not *answerable* to another man, or body of men, for his sense of scripture in this or in any other point; seeing no man can be obliged to *submit his judgement* to another in any case, where that other has no *authority* over him. But no man, or body of men, can have an authority over the judgments of other men, except he, or they, be constituted an *absolute judge*, to give an *absolute* and *certain determination* in the case refer'd to; which no man, or body of men, can *pretend* themselves to be. And, therefore, if another man should give a *different* sense, of the aforesaid text, to what I may put upon it, it would be *unwisely* and *cruel* for me to disrespect him, and treat him ill upon that  
 1                                    *could be alike cruel and inhu-*  
                                          *man, or body of*  
                                          *men,*

men, to *disrespect* or treat me *ill* for the like reason.  
And,

Tho' the *church of Rome* pretends to be *infallible*, and under the shelter of that pretence sets up her sense of the scripture, as the *standard* for all men to govern their judgments by, and requires them to receive her sense as the *true sense*; yet, alas! she is not able to produce the shadow of a *proof* for what she thus assumes; and therefore she must stand *condemned*, in the judgment of God, and of every judicious man. Tho' it must be granted, that she is much more *excusable* than that *man*, or *body of men*, who make no pretence to infallibility in the present case, and yet set up *their sense* of the *Bible* as the standard for other men's judgments to be framed by, and *afflict* and *grieve* them, if they refuse subjection to it; which procedure, surely, is most exceeding *monstrous* and *vile*. And, as men are *liable* to err, in the present case, so if *one man*, or *body of men*, sets up his or their opinion of things, as the standard for other men's judgments to be formed by, this is making not the *Bible*, but his or their opinion of things the *rule of truth*; seeing such a man, or body of men, is not constituted an *infallible judge*, and so is not qualify'd to give an absolute and certain determination in the case before us. This is what the church of *Rome* are well aware of; and therefore they not only insist upon the absolute necessity of an infallible judge to determine in matters of faith, and to guard and secure men from error, but they likewise insist, that *that infallible judge* is *with them*. And, as the *Papists* insist upon the absolute necessity of an infallible living judge to determine in matters of faith, and thereby to guard and secure men from error; so they ground that necessity upon this proposition, *viz. That all errors, in matters of faith,*



*are damnable.* This is the foundation or groundwork upon which that prodigious fabrick, *viz. popery*, rests. Make void this foundation and the *strength* of popery, in point of *argument* is lost and gone. And as popery, so *persecution* is founded upon the same principle; for tho' every persecutor does not insist, that all errors, in point of faith, are damnable, yet generally they insist, that *those errors are so*, which they persecute for; which comes to the same thing, because it is the *damnableness* of error which is the *ground* of persecution in either case. So that if the foremention'd proposition, *viz.* that errors, in point of faith, are damnable, can be shewed to be *erroneous*, then *popery* and *persecution*, in point of argument, must fall together. But building upon the foremention'd foundation is like building upon the sand, which when just reasoning and solid argument is brought against it, then the foundation is washed away, and the stately structure, which rests upon it, falls to the ground. For, as the *Bible*, when admitted as the *rule of truth*, is not an *absolute security* against error, as I have shewn above; so all errors, of what kind soever, which spring from it, cannot, in the nature of the thing, lay a *just foundation* for divine displeasure, because they are the product of a *mistaken* judgment only, and not of a *vicious* mind. If the case were otherwise, and mens mistakes were their *crimes* (tho' this, indeed, is an impossible supposition, because error cannot possibly have the *nature* of a crime in it) or if God would consider it as *criminal* (tho' this, again, is making another impossible supposition, because it is morally impossible for God to be guilty of so much *weakness* and *injustice*) I say, if the case were so, then there would be that *absolute necessity* of an infallible living judge, as the *church of Rome* contends for, to guard and secure

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men from error, because without such a judge men would be perpetually running the *utmost hazard*: Tho' this, indeed, would not prove the Bishop of *Rome* to be that *judge*, or that *infallibility* is any where lodged in the *church of Rome*.

Seeing then that error is the effect of judgment, and not of choice, and therefore cannot possibly have in it the nature of a crime; consequently, *error*, let it relate to what point soever, cannot possibly render men the *suitable* and *proper objects* of divine displeasure. And as error is not criminal in itself, so much less will God consider and treat men *as criminals* upon the account of it; seeing God is a *righteous judge*, and therefore he will not esteem or treat any man as a criminal, except he be really so. And as this is the truth of the case, so it is such an answer to the *Papists* and *persecutors*, as they cannot possibly get over; because it is made up of *self-evident propositions*; and consequently the above proposition (*viz.* that all, or that any errors in matters of faith are damnable, and which is the *ground-work* of popery and persecution) is to be *denied absolutely*, it being plainly repugnant to the nature of things, and therefore is *absolutely false*. To distinguish here betwixt points *fundamental* and *not fundamental*, or in other words, points of greater or less importance to mankind; and to insist, that *want of faith*, with regard to the former, will be judged *criminal* by Almighty God; this is to cast a most shameful imputation upon the God of *truth* and *goodness*; seeing that the only *proper ground* of assent or dissent, in any case, is not the greater or less importance of the subject to which the proposition relates, but only the *strength* or *weakness* of that evidence upon which the truth or falseness of the proposition depends. And since *error does not change* its nature by the greater or

less importance of the subject, but continues the same in every subject, of what importance soever it be ; consequently, dissent must be equally *criminal*, or *innocent*, whether the subject be of great, or of no importance to us at all.

If it should be urged, that error, in points of faith, does not become criminal by any *natural wiliness* in error itself, but only in the present case it becomes so, as it casts contempt upon Almighty God, by being a dissent to a proposition which he has revealed : I *answer*, that no man ever yet *refused* assent to a proposition founded upon a divine testimony, when *known* to be such. And if assent is at any time with-held from such a proposition, either for *want* of *conviction* that is founded upon a divine testimony, or that the sense of the proposition to which assent is demanded is the true sense ; in either of these cases, it is so far from casting contempt upon Almighty God, that, on the contrary, it is no more than with-holding assent in a case, in which, in the nature of the thing, it *ought not* to be given. In such a case God's *veracity* is not in the least impeach'd, and consequently no injury is offered to his moral character ; because the present question is not, whether the testimony of God be a proper *ground* of credit, and so whether all propositions whose credibility rests upon it be the proper *objects* of assent, that being granted on all sides ; but whether assent ought to be given in a case, where there does not appear *sufficient* evidence to determine the judgment on that side of the question to which assent is demanded, neither are those, who demand that assent, able to produce the shadow of a *proof*, that they are infallible, and so are qualified to give an absolute and certain *determination* in the case referred to. I say, the  
is, whether, in such a case, assent ought  
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to be given ; and I think it is evident, from the nature of the thing, that it ought not ; and if so, then, surely, it is a manifest *contempt*, and an *injury* offer'd to God's moral character, to represent him as requiring assent, and punishing men for withholding it, in a case, where, in the nature of the thing, it *ought not* to be given.

If it should be said, that *faith* has the promise of *salvation* annex'd to it in the gospel, and that *infidelity* is declared *dammable*. To this I answer, that faith, or the want of it, is not to be understood in a *philosophical*, but in a *moral sense* ; that is, men will not be saved or damned for their *giving* or *with-holding* their assent to this proposition, *viz.* that the gospel of Christ is a divine revelation ; but they will be saved or damned, as the *end* and *purpose* of that gospel is or is not answered upon them. It is the same as if our Lord had said, tho' men, by their sin and wickedness, have exposed themselves to the just displeasure of Almighty God, yet he now, by *my ministry*, makes this kind and gracious offer to them, *viz.* that if they will repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, then he will pardon their sins, and receive them to favour ; but, on the other side, if they will, notwithstanding this kind offer, still go on in their wickedness, then God will execute his highest displeasure upon them. *He that believeth*, that is, he who accepts of this gracious offer, answers the end and purpose of it, by turning from the evil of his ways, and by bringing forth the fruits of newness of life, *he shall be saved* ; but *he that believeth not*, that is, he who unworthily rejects this kind offer, by an obstinate continuance in his folly, *he shall be damned*. This, I say, is the sense of the *aforsaid* declaration, as is abundantly evident, not only from the nature of the subject,

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but also from the tenour of the *New Testament*. If I was in a house with a company of men, and was absolutely certain that the house would fall to the ground in an hour's time, and consequently that every soul present would *inevitably perish*, except they fled out of it, before that fall ; and if I gave them timely warning of their danger ; in this case, it would not be their *faith* or their *infidelity*, with regard to this warning, but their going out, or *their continuing in this house*, which would be the *cause* of their *safety* or *destruction*. So in like manner, man, by his sin and wickedness, has exposed himself to God's displeasure, and Christ is sent to apprise him of his danger, and to shew him the only and the certain way of escaping from it, *viz.* by repentance, and reformation of his evil ways : Now if he so far hearkens to this message as to repent and amend, he will be saved, whether he is satisfied of the *divinity* of this message, or not ; but, if he goes on in his wickedness, he will be damned, though he *believes* its divinity ever so strongly. So, that in this case, it is not mens *infidelity*, strictly speaking, but their *obstinate continuance in their sins*, which is the *ground* and *cause* of their *damnation*. Besides, if the forementioned terms were to be understood in a philosophical sense, then the proposition, to which they relate, would be plainly *repugnant* to the *nature of things* ; because it is morally impossible for God to be *pleased* or *displeased* with any agent, for *barely giving* or *with-holding* his assent to this or any other proposition ; this assent being the effect of judgment, and not of choice (as I observed above) man being so far *passive* in the present case, as that, if he attends to the subject, he cannot think and judge otherwise of it than he does. And,

As error cannot, in the nature of the thing, lay a just foundation for divine resentment, so much less ought it to be the occasion of *displeasure to men*, with regard to one another; seeing it is what all men are involved in, or at least they cannot be certain of the contrary. For tho' no man thinks himself in an error in any point, yet if he has a grain of modesty in him, he will admit that this *may* possibly be his case in one instance or other, tho' he sees it not. And therefore for men to be *angry* with, and to *grieve* and *afflict* one another for their *different opinions*, in any case whatever, is most *unreasonable* and *cruel*, and is plainly repugnant to that common golden rule, of *doing to all others as we would they should do unto us*. If error did draw forth *divine displeasure*, and men would be plunged into endless misery in another world for its sake, then, indeed, there would be some *shew* of reason for persecution, and for taking away mens lives upon the account of it; as the less evil of a few is preferable to the much greater evil of many others. For tho' punishment is not a proper means of *conviction*, yet it may be urged, that, in this case, it is necessary to guard and secure the *common good*. The robber is executed, not to work a conviction in him that robbery is an error or a crime, but because by robbery he is become injurious to the present common happiness. So, in like manner, if error were *dammable*, then he that propagates it, must be allowed to be (tho' not intentionally. yet eventually) a *common enemy* to the future happiness of mankind. And tho' taking away such a man's life would be to him a great injury, yet it may be urged, that it would be necessary for the common safety; just as when a fire breaks forth, the pulling down one man's house is necessary to save the burning of the town. But then

then it must be remembered, that if this be the case, there would be, as I observed above, an *absolute necessity* of an *infallible judge*, whom every man could have free recourse to, and receive from him an absolute and certain determination of the case in every disputable point whatever; for otherwise mankind would lie under the *greatest hardship* possible. And, therefore, the Church of *Rome*, how contrary soever she acts to the christian religion, yet she still preserves a kind of *consistency with herself*; she persecutes, as aforesaid, but then she insists that those errors are *damnable* which she persecutes for, and that there is with her an infallible living judge to *guard* and *secure* men from those errors; and that when this becomes ineffectual, and error takes place, then she persecutes merely out of *necessity*, thereby to prevent the propagation of this evil, and as a proper expedient to prevent the future endless misery of mankind. So that, as I said before, if error were damnable, then there would be some *show* of reason for religious persecution. But if it were admitted, that persecution will follow, as a just consequence from the aforesaid principle, *viz.* that error is damnable, yet it is by no means to be *justified*: Because,

*First*, He that persecutes is not constituted an *infallible judge*, and so is not qualified to give an absolute and certain determination in any disputable point of faith; and therefore persecution must be *wrong*, let it come from what quarter soever. It is true, the Church of *Rome*, in order to justify herself in this case, pretends to be infallible; but this is only pretended, and not *proved*; therefore she is not *justified* by this pretence, but, on the contrary, all her persecutions may be justly charged upon her as *crimes*. Again,

Secondly,

Secondly, Persecution is not justifiable, because the forementioned principle is *false* upon which it is founded. For as nothing can be justly esteemed *criminal*, but a *wilful* chusing to do evil, when it is in our power to chuse and do the contrary, or a wilful chusing to omit doing that good which is in our own power to do; and as error is only a defect in the *understanding*, and in which the will is not concerned; so, consequently, error, in any point whatever, cannot lay a *just foundation* for divine displeasure; and, if so, then it cannot be a just ground for *persecution*.

If it should be said, that tho' error, considered as an act of the understanding, be not criminal; yet when mens understandings are *misled* by their *vicious inclinations*, then the errors, which they fall into, become criminal, because, if they had not *indulged* their vicious inclinations, their understandings would not have been misled, and consequently they would not have fallen into such errors. I *answer*, whatever viciousness there is in men, that must, in the nature of the thing, be criminal, in itself, and displeasing to Almighty God; and if such viciousness should, in any instance, be the *ground* \* and *cause* of error, such error would not hereby become criminal; because the *fault* in this case, does not lie in man's *error*, which is the effect, but only in his *indulging* his vicious inclinations, which was the *ground* and *cause* of that error; and because a man's *vices* will render him equally criminal, and displeasing to Almighty God, whether those vices are *introductive* to any error, or not. The case is the same, whether error be the produce of *sloth*, *bigotry*, or the

\* By *viciousness* being the *ground* and *cause* of error, I mean, when a man's vicious inclinations bias his judgment (tho' he discerns it not) and disposes him to lean to one side of the question rather than to the other.



like ; in which cases, a man's mistakes are not his crimes, because, whatever criminalness he may be chargeable with, it arises from his *refusing* or *neglecting* to make use of the means which he might and could have made use of, to bring him to the knowledge of the truth. I say, whatever in such a case is criminal in a man, it must, in the nature of the thing, *consist in*, and be *confined* to that wherein his *will* is concerned, that is, wherein he chuses to do what he might and ought to have avoided, or chuses to avoid what he might and ought to have done. Error, or a wrong judgment, being strictly and properly the act of the understanding, and in which the will is not concerned (it being impossible, in the nature of the thing, for a man to *chuse* to err) it cannot possibly have in it the nature of a crime ; and therefore, how *faulty* soever men be that are in error, when they neglect or refuse to make use of the means proper for their conviction, their errors cannot be *justly charged* upon them as their *crimes*, but their faultiness must arise from something wherein their *wills* are concerned, as I observed above.

If it should be farther urged, that men are not persecuted for their errors considered as errors, but for their *obstinacy* and *perverseness* which led them into those errors, and which is the cause of their persisting in them : I *answer*, admitting that such obstinacy and perverseness *may* be justly chargeable upon some men, yet it cannot be a *just ground* for persecution ; because, *first*, no man can be a *judge* who is justly chargeable with such obstinacy, and who not. The springs of action are so far a *secret* locked up in every man's own breast, that one man cannot be an *absolute* and *infallible judge*, what are the springs and cause of action to any other man ; and therefore, if one man charges  
obstinacy

obstinacy and perverseness upon another man, as the ground and cause of error in him; in such a case, he takes upon him to determine a point, which he cannot possibly be a judge of. The case is the same, if we consider *vicious inclinations* as the ground and cause of error; for tho' this may possibly be the case, in some instances, yet it is what no man, or body of men, can be a judge of, to or for any other man; and therefore no man, or body of men, can have a *right* to judge of the ground and cause of error, except he, or they, be constituted an *infallible judge*, to give an absolute and certain determination of the case; which no man, or body of men, can *prove* themselves to be. Again, *secondly*, error, in the cases here referred to, cannot be a *just ground* for persecution, because tho' it might be a *misfortune* to the erroneous person himself, yet it is no way *injurious* to the present or future *happiness* of mankind. If a man should be in an error, and if his error should spring either from his *obstinacy* or his *vicious inclinations*, the case would be just the same to the rest of mankind, as if it had sprung from the most *careful enquiry* possible; so that their happiness and well-being, as to this world and the next, would not be affected by it. And therefore to *afflict* and *punish* a man for erring, as aforesaid, would be to do what we have no *authority* for, and therefore would be *unjustifiable*. The case is the same, whether error relates to this or that *point* of faith, or to the *rule* of faith itself; that is, as christians cannot be *justified* in treating one another ill, for their different opinions, with respect to the *christian religion*; so neither can *christians* or *infidels* be justified in persecuting one another, for their different apprehensions, with regard to the *divinity* of the christian revelation. For as christians cannot, in the nature of the thing, have

a right

a *right of dominion* over unbelievers, so as to *demand* their assent to this proposition, *viz.* that the gospel of Christ is a *divine revelation*; nor to *punish* them for *with-holding* their assent, when the evidence proposed is not sufficient to work their conviction; so, on the other side, the unbelievers cannot, in the nature of the thing, have a *right of dominion* over believers, so as to *prohibit* their assent, when the evidence produced, for the *divinity* of the christian revelation, is sufficient for their conviction. So that persecution is equally *unreasonable*, and *cruel*, and therefore is *unjustifiable* on either side.

If it should be farther urged, that tho' error is not criminal in itself, yet it may be attended with such *consequences* as are *injurious* to mankind, that is, mens errors may lead them into such *practices* as are *hurtful* to their neighbours, and therefore such errors ought to be *restrained*. I answer, that as the *end* of government is to *guard* and *secure* the common good, so it must be the *business* and *duty* of governours to prevent and hinder men from *injuring* one another, by making such laws as are proper to secure *mens persons, properties,* and *reputation*, and to execute those laws by *punishing transgressors*. But then it will by no means follow, that men are to be punished, *antecedent* to their faults, and upon a *presumption* that one time or other they will be guilty of them; which is the present case. When men perform such actions as are *injurious* to the *commonwealth*, it is the business of governours to *correct* and *restrain* them, whether those actions are the effect of *error*, or whether they spring from any other *cause*. But then the *ground* and *reason* of such correction is evidently this, *viz.* the *hurtfulness* of the *actions themselves*, and not the *right* or the *wrong judgment* of the performer, which may be the ground

or reason of them. A man's wrong judgment, in any point, cannot *hurt* or *injure* his neighbours, till it be reduced to *practice*; and, therefore, till it be reduced to practice, it cannot, in the nature of the thing, be the proper object of *resentment*; and consequently it cannot render the man the *proper object* of correction. Suppose a man should be of opinion that there is no such thing as *property*, and consequently that he has as *good a title* to possess and enjoy what his neighbour is legally possessed of as the possessor. This opinion is as *dangerous*, with regard to its consequences, as any; and yet, whilst it continues *barely an opinion*, or an act of the man's judgment only, it is not *injurious* or *hurtful* to any; and therefore to *punish* a man, for being of such an opinion, would be to punish in a case, where there is no *fault* or *injury* done, and consequently to punish where there is no *just ground* for it. But if a man of this principle should take the liberty to break in upon his neighbour's *property*, and should *erroneously* think himself *innocent* in so doing, he would be the object of *publick resentment* and *correction*; because he breaks in upon the publick *tranquillity*, which it is the *business* of government to *guard* and *secure*. And in this case it is not a man's error, but his *injurious actions*, which render him *worthy* of punishment, such actions being always to be *prevented* and *guarded* against, let them spring from what *motive* or *principle* soever. And therefore, as on the one side a man ought not to be *punished* for his opinion, tho' erroneous, because his errors in judgment are not *injurious* nor *hurtful* to any; so, on the other side, if his error should lead him to *actions* which are *hurtful* to his neighbours, he ought to come under a *publick restraint*; not because he errs, but because he performs such actions as are *hurtful* to others,



others, and are equally as *hurtful*, when they spring from *error*, as when they spring from any other cause. And,

As error ought to *screen* a man from correction, when he performs such actions as are hurtful to his neighbours; so when error relates to the *personal character* or *property* of others, and the publication of it is, *in itself*, *injurious*, then such publication ought to be *restrained*. Suppose one man should *erroneously* think another man to be a *thief*, or a *knave*; or that the present government is *illegal*, and that it ought to be taken out of the hands in which it is lodged, and to be put into the hands of others; in either of these cases, the *publication* of error is *hurtful*, as it is a breaking in upon the *personal character* and *property* of others, which it is the business of government to guard and secure. And tho', in the latter case, the government is not *unbinged* by such publications, yet every such action is a *step towards it*, and therefore it ought to be *restrained*; it being as fit that governours should guard and secure their *own rights* and *possessions*, as the rights and possessions of those they are governours to. But, tho' the publication of error is to be restrained, when such publication relates to the personal character or property of others, and is itself injurious and hurtful; yet it will, by no means, follow, that it is the business and duty of governours to restrain the publication of *all errors* whatever. On the contrary, it is the business and duty of governours to *guard* and *defend* men from injury in the *publication* of their errors, except the publication itself be *injurious* and *hurtful*, as aforesaid; for as man is a *dependent creature*, designed for society; and as the business of society is principally carried on by mens *conveying* their *ideas* one to another; so it is the *business* and *duty* of governours to *guard* and *protect*

*protect* men in so doing, whilst that conveyance is not injurious nor hurtful to the rest of mankind. Every erroneous person thinks he judges *rightly*, and that they are in the wrong who are contrary-minded to him; and as he is naturally disposed to publish his opinions, and thereby to bring others to the knowledge of what *he apprehends* to be *truth*; so herein he ought, in reason, to be guarded and protected from *harm*, when the publication of his opinions is no way *injurious* to the personal character or property of any. Again,

If it should be further urged, that tho' *true religion*, or that duty which men owe to their *Creator*, and to their *fellow-creatures*, arises from the *relation* they stand to God, and to each other, and therefore must be *perpetually* and *invariably* the same in all ages and places; yet the *externals* of religion, or the forms or modes of worship, by which men pay their acknowledgments to God, are of an *indifferent nature*, and therefore may be *varied* as the circumstances of things shall require; and as governours are the *guardians* of *humans happiness*, so they ought to *appoint* forms of worship, and to *punish* those who *dissent* from them, and who pay their respect to God in a way different from what the government has appointed, because such dissent introduces *disorder*, and is *injurious* to society.

*I answer*, That as government was designed for the *good* of *mankind*, by obliging each individual to pay that *debt* which (according to his condition and circumstances in life) he owes to *society*, and by guarding the *persons*, the *reputations*, and the *properties* of men from being *injured* by each other; so governours ought to use all *proper means* for the attaining those valuable ends. And as the appointing publick forms of worship, for men to pay their acknowledgments to God by, and persons to minister therein, and to be constant monitors to stir up the people to their duty,



may be *subservient* to the *publick good*; so, I think, it is right and fit that governours should make such a provision, that every one may have the *opportunity* to pay their publick acknowledgments to God, which the generality of mankind think it is their *duty* to do. But then as the duty which every mans owes to his Maker arises from that *relation* which he stands in to him, and as society is no way *interested* therein; so, in the nature of the thing, he is not *answerable* to society for the *performance* of that duty, or the *neglect* of it. If he worships God publickly, no man is a *gainer*; and, if he neglects it, no man is a *loser* thereby. If he worships God *this way* or *that way*, whilst no man is *injured* in his so doing, he *cannot*, in the nature of the thing, be the *proper object* of publick resentment or correction.

The *ground* and *foundation* of society, and consequently of government, I take to be this; man is a dependent creature, who in a single capacity is not qualified to *procure* the *comforts*, nor *guard* against the *evils* of life; so that he is not only from the *reason* of the thing, and from his *social affections*, led into society, but also from his *natural indigent* condition in life, is under a kind of necessity to fall into it, or of constituting a *publick interest*; by which means every individual is, or at least ought to be obliged to perform his part towards the *support* of the *whole*, and consequently of each individual, which they, in their single capacity, were not capable of doing for themselves. And likewise by this means all proper measures are, or ought to be taken to *guard* and *secure* each individual from that *injury* and *harm* which they, in their single capacity, are not qualified to secure themselves from. And as governours are no other than the *ministers* and *representatives* of society, who act for them, and in their place

place and stead, so they *cannot*, in the nature of the thing, have any just *demand* upon an individual, except in those cases in which it is for the the *publick good*; neither can they justly lay a *restraint* upon an individual, but in those cases in which the *publick* is *injur'd*; and consequently they can have no right, as governours, to *demand* the use of those modes of worship which they provide, nor to *punish* men for *dissenting* from them, because the publick is not *benefited* by the former, nor *injured* by the latter. And,

Whereas it is urged, that *dissent* from the forms of worship, which the government has appointed, introduces *disorder*, and is *injurious* to society; it must be granted, that there has been *difference* of opinions, with respect to the forms of worship among christians; men have likewise *dissented* from those forms which the government has appointed; much *disorder* has followed, and much *injury* has been done to society hereby. But then it is to be remembered, that such disorder, &c. did not spring from a *liberty* of dissent, but from a *restraint* of that liberty. If men were left perfectly at *liberty* to worship God in the way which every man *judged best*, no *disorder* or *injury* to society could possibly attend it, provided there was nothing in the *act* of *worship* *injurious* to others. If every particular *family* had a particular mode of worship, no one could be a *sufferer* hereby, and consequently no *injury* is done to *society*. But, if governours restrain that liberty, by *punishing dissenters*, then every evil follows. Men are then *afflicted* and *grieved* without any just *cause*; they are *tempted* to be *hypocrites*, to violate their *natural consciences*; their *resentment* is raised, and they are by this means *drawn* into *faults*, which otherwise they would not be guilty of. It likewise gives *evil-minded* men an opportunity of *insulting*



and *triumphing* over their persecuted neighbours, of loading them with *reproach*, and taking every opportunity of adding to their *burden*. It would be endless to enumerate all the *evils* which attend the *restraint* of liberty in this case. Add to this, that the disorders and injuries done to *society*, here referr'd to, did not, strictly speaking, spring from men's *different* religious opinions, or modes of worship, but from that *worldly wealth*, and *authority* to direct the understandings and consciences of men, which have been *tacked* to them, and which the *leaders* of each party have been too apt to *assume* to themselves. If no worldly *advantage* or *disadvantage* had attended men's religious opinions, or modes of worship, which in *reason* ought not, then, I imagine the disputes about *episcopacy* and *presbytery*, about *forms* and *extemporary prayer*, and the like, would not have been *injurious* or *hurtful* to mankind; but when *honours*, *large possessions*, and *authority* are tacked to this or that set of opinions, or this or that mode of worship, this has proved a powerful *temptation* to each party to make use of all methods, how unjustifiable soever, to *gain* or *secure* them; and this has introduced a world of *evils* and *misery* upon mankind. It is not enough to say, in this case, that it were *better* if all men did worship God in the same way, because then there would be *no place* for contention upon this foot. For admitting this to be *true*, yet it is what is not to be *expected*; and to attempt to procure it by *persecution* is to make use of a *desperate remedy*, indeed, a remedy a thousand times worse than the disease; a remedy, which as already done so much *mischiefe* in the world, that one would think every good man should *tremble* at the thoughts of it. But farther,

If there should be urged, in favour of persecution, such texts as these, *Matt. xv. 13. Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.* I answer, I shall not take upon me to enquire into the *sense* of those words of Christ, or of any other text in which men think that persecution is *countenanced*; all I shall observe is this, that each religious party will be sure to interpret them in their *own favour*, and to the *prejudice* of those who are contrary-minded to them. And from hence it will follow, that if those words are a *proper argument*, and the ground and reason for *persecution* to one sect of christians, then they will be so to every other sect. And this, indeed, would make good, in a literal sense, those other words of Christ, that *he came not to bring peace on the earth, but a sword*; because this would lay a *foundation* for a *thorough persecution*, and *Christendom* would become a *field of blood*. The *Papists*, of course, will consider themselves to be the *vineyard* which the *Lord* hath *planted*, and that all other sects and parties of christians are plants which their heavenly Father hath not planted, and which, therefore, are to be *rooted up*. The case will be the same, with respect to *Protestants*; the *episcopal* party will consider themselves as *branches* of *God's planting*, and that all other sects are plants which their heavenly Father hath not planted, and therefore are to be rooted up. The *Presbyterians* will likewise, of course, consider themselves as *branches* of the *Lord's planting*, and that all others are plants which their heavenly Father hath not planted, and therefore to be rooted up. This language and reasoning will suit *Independants*, *Anabaptists*, *Quakers*, *Muggletonians*, and all other *sects* and *parties* of christians whatever; they are, each of them, in their *own estimation*, the branch of *God's planting*, the work of his

hand; whereas all others are plants which their heavenly Father hath not planted, and therefore are to be rooted up. In short, this is such language and reasoning as will suit all parties, and all countries, as well *North and South-Britain, as Spain or Portugal*: every man may gird his sword upon his thigh, and go forth in the *name and strength* of the Lord his God, and stay till he has laid heap upon heap, because *every plant which his heavenly Father hath not planted, is to be plucked up root and branch*. Thus stands the case, if persecution be admitted upon such reasoning, as above. But can so *vile* a thing as persecution, which introduces nothing but *misery* into this world, and which answers *no good end*, with relation to another; Can that, I say, be *justified*, or so much as *courtenanced* from the religion of Christ? no, certainly. The christian religion is excellently calculated to promote the common tranquility, by recommending *peace, unanimity, forbearance, brotherly kindness, and universal charity* to our practice. Yea, it recommends *loving and doing good*, and contributing all we can to each other's *happiness in this world*, as the *only sure way* to obtain the happiness of another; and therefore one would think it above the skill of the most subtle sophister, to extract *the deadly poison* of persecution from it. And yet, how *monstrous and unnatural* soever this may be, it has proved true in fact; christians have not only persecuted, but they have likewise endeavour'd to *justify* their conduct herein, from the *christian revelation*; which, were it not for the commonness of it, would be too surprizing a thing to be imagined. Upon the whole I hope it appears that *error* is not *damnable*, and that *persecution* is not *justifiable*.

The use I would make of this discourse is to observe, that as *persecution* is an *evil thing* and  
*bitter,*

bitter, and which can by no means be *justified*, as I have before shewn; so it is high time that it were *banished* out of the *christian world*. Alas! How many weeping eyes and aching hearts has it *causlesly* produced, and how many precious lives have been sacrificed as *victims* to it? Is it not, then, full time for christians to think with themselves, that persecution is not a *beauty*, but a *blemish* to their profession? and that as their obligation to *love*, and *do good* to each other, arises from their being *men*, who are, by nature, entered into the one *great society*, or commonwealth of mankind; so it is not their different opinions in any point, which can possibly *cancel* or take off this obligation? And, as persecution is exceeding vile in itself, so it does not *change its nature* from the different hands thro' which it passes; it continues the same in all *countries*, in all *parties*, and in all *persons*, tho' it is, indeed, *less excusable* in some than in others, as being more inconsistent with some mens principles, than with other mens. And thus persecution is less excusable in a *Protestant* than in a *Papist*, as I have shewn above. And tho' some men are apt to see it in a *different light*, when they view it in another party, than when they see it in their own, it being *gilded over*, and called by another *name* in the latter case; yet it is not really another, but the same thing. The *afflicting* and *grieving* men, for the sake of their *religious principles*, is persecution, whether it be in *Poland* or in *Britain*; and therefore it ought to be equally *detested* by us. The many cruelties practised by the *Roman Catholics* have often *deeply affected* the protestant world, and made every tender heart to bleed; and yet *Protestants* have been too apt to *cherish* that *viper* in their *own bosoms*, which, when seen at a distance preying upon



others, raises in them so much *horror* and *indignation*. And, as persecution does not change its nature, from the different hands by which it is executed, so neither is it less persecution, by reason of the *different way*, or the *different degree* in which it is practised. The afflicting and grieving men, for the sake of their opinions, is persecution, in *what way*, or in *what degree* soever it takes place. He that makes his neighbour's *differing* from him, in opinion, the *ground* and reason of his contributing to his *unhappiness*, is guilty of persecution, whether he afflicts him in this or that way, or to a greater or less degree. Persecution in its *notorious instances* (such as the cruelties of the *inquisition*, the massacres of *France* or *Ireland*, the burnings of *Smithfield*, the executions at *Tbörn*, and the like) is exceeding *shocking* to human nature, as it makes a deep impression upon the more tender part of our composition, *viz.* our affections, and thereby chills our blood, when we reflect upon it. And as the *greater instances* only *deeply affect* us, and strike us with *horror*; so some men are apt to think that these only are *vile*, and come under the name of *persecution*; whereas every *injury*, done to our neighbour, for the sake of his *religious principles*, is persecution, and has the same *natural vileness*, of what degree soever it be. It springs from the same *root*, and would, if *indulged*, carry men to the highest *severities*. The same spirit which disposes one man to bring another before the judgment-seat, in order to have him *fined or imprisoned*, for his advancing a proposition which contradicts another proposition that had been advanced before, would, if indulged, dispose him to hale the other to *execution*, tho', possibly, it is what at first he did not intend. If those men who are for *moderate persecution*, as some call it, should be told, that the time would come in which

which they would imbrue their hands in the blood of their innocent neighbours, they would be apt to cry out with Hazael, *Am I a dog, that I should do this great wickedness?* And yet the same motive, and the same spirit which disposed them to the less, would, if followed effectually, lead them on to do the greater evil.

Is it then not high time for christians, of all denominations whatever, to put on the spirit of christianity, by putting on that spirit and temper which abundantly shewed itself in him whose name they bear? The spirit of Christ is a spirit of love, and *love worketh no ill to its neighbour*. And as our being animated by this spirit is what will be an evidence to us that we are Christ's true Disciples; so this will be such an antidote as will effectually expel and purge out of us the poisonous spirit of persecution. Persecution is of a growing nature; and, when once it breaks out, we cannot possibly judge where it will stop; and, therefore, we ought carefully to guard against all approaches to it, which will be effectually done by subjecting our tempers and actions to Christ's law of love. And, as we ought to purge out every thing that may dispose us to persecution, so we ought, from the reason of the thing, to use our endeavours to check and controul it, when or wherever it appears. Persecution is a deadly evil, which every heart and every hand should be engaged to banish from this world. We are all, by nature, united in the one great society, or commonwealth of mankind; and tho' we are divided into kingdoms, nations, &c. which are parts and branches of that one great society; yet our union with one part does not destroy our relation, nor take off our obligations to the rest. We are, by nature, so far made guardians of each other's happiness, as that it becomes our duty, when their necessity calls, and our ability enables, to minister assistance

assistance and succour to them. Let then every *Protestant*, every *christian*, every *man* put forth his endeavour to suppress and banish, as a *common evil*, persecution from this globe. But,

O Happy, thrice happy *Britain* ! she sitteth as a *Queen* among the nations, and as a *Princess* among the provinces, and knows no *such sorrow*, being under the guardianship of a Prince \*, whose reign has not been polluted and stained with the *blood of persecution*, and I trust will not ; a Prince who has hitherto not only made *Britain's enemies* to be at *peace* with her, but has kept her also from offering *violence to herself*, and from thrusting a dagger into her own breast ; which is the case of persecution. Her children, tho' *differing* much in their religious sentiments (which, possibly, is the case all the world over, where men have not *padlocks* put upon their *understandings*) may every one sit down under his own vine, and under his fig-tree, enjoying the fruits of their own labour, and have none to make them *afraid*. In her the sons of *violence* cannot hurt ; and, by the blessing of a good government, the *lionish*, *wolfish spirit*, which is *greedy of prey*, and *longs to devour*, is made peaceably to lie down with the *lamb*, yea, the *kid*, the *fatling*, and the *young lion* lie down together. O *Britain* ! may *such peace* long continue within thy walls, and *plenteousness* within thy palaces ; and may thy *happy days* be lengthened out to many generations ; be thou as a city, that is at *unity* in itself, whose members are cemented together by the *spirit of love*. Let thy *virtue* and *goodness* render thee amiable in the sight of the nations ; and let thy glory shine forth as the *sun* at noon-day. May thy *guardian angel* long continue to be such ; let him not go down to the grave. till he hath filled up a *good old age*,

\* K. George I.

and be gathered to his fathers as a shock of corn that is full ripe. May the *Princes* that spring out of his loins be *Britain's Protectors* to our latestt posterity. And, O that it may be a *diadem* in their *crown*, that they have answered the purposes of government, by *guarding* and *securing* the happiness of this people. And may every design formed against *them*, or *Britain's prosperity*, be *blasted* and brought to nought. But, can there be any man who can *wish* the removal of *such a government*, whilst they happily live under the *protection* of it? If any such there are, as they must be *monsters in nature*, so I trust their number is but *small*. We are guarded from *enemies abroad*, and kept in the quiet possession of every *blessing at home*, which government was designed to *secure to us*. And what farther can we wish for? Nor, surely, for the return of a *Popish Pretender*, because that is to wish the *return of popery*, the *return of misery*. Popery is an engine fitted to *destroy* and *lay waste* the happiness of mankind, by introducing *oppression, tyranny, and persecution*. Can then any man, who wishes *Britain's glory and happiness*, desire the removal of that *Prince*, that *family* from the throne, which are our *only security*? And can he wish for the placing a *Popish Pretender* in their stead? No, that is an apparent *contradiction*; every such person being, in the nature of the thing, an *enemy to Britain's happiness*.

To conclude, let *persecution* cease; and be no more heard of, either in *Britain* or in this *world*. And let *peace* and *tranquillity* flourish and prevail in *this* and in *all lands*. And then the gracious purpose of our kind Creator will be fully answered, in the *common felicity* of his creatures; to which I am persuaded every good man will say, *Amen*.



TRACT XXIII.  
AN  
EXAMINATION

OF

Mr. *BARCLAY*'s Principles,  
With Regard to Man's natural Ability  
since the fall;

As laid down in his Book, entitled, *An Apology for the true Christian Divinity, as the same is held forth and preached by the People called, in Scorn, Quakers.* Wherein is shewn, That the said Principles are *erroneous*, and in which *Human Nature* is vindicated from that Burden of Reproach he has loaded it with. In a Letter to Friend, occasion'd by the great Commendation given to Mr. *Barclay*'s Performance, in the *British Journal*, No XXX. and now offered to the Consideration of the People called *Quakers*.

S I R,

**A**S the great commendation given to Mr. *Barclay*'s performance, in the *British Journal*, awakened your curiosity, and dispos'd you to buy the book; and as your reading it induced you to put it into my hands, that I might give you my opinion of that performance; so I have, in justice to truth, sent you

you my thoughts of it, in this publick way. For tho' the book has been publish'd many years, and the author is long since dead, and so the taking notice of it, in this way, may have the appearance of unfairness; yet, seeing it has been lately so highly commended, in a publick news-paper; when this, is consider'd, that colour of unfairness which otherwise my examing it might be liable to, I think, is taken away.

The *British Journal*, Saturday, April 13, 1723. Numb. XXX. gives the the following character of Mr. Barclay's scheme and performance. "I am not ashamed to own, that I have, with great pleasure read over Mr. Barclay's Apology for Quakerism, and do really think it to be the most masterly, charitable, and reasonable system, that I have ever seen. It solves the numerous difficulties, rais'd by other sects, and, by turns, thrown at one another; shews all parts of the scripture to be uniform and consistent; and as Sir Isaac Newton, by allowing him gravitation, has accounted for all the phænomena of nature; so if we allow Mr. Barclay those operations of the spirit, which the Quakers pretend to feel, and which, he says every man in the world has, and may feel, if he watches its motions, and does not suppress them; then, I think, all the jangling vain questions, numerous, superstitious, and various oppressions, which have plagued the world from the beginning, would cease, and be at an end."

I shall not concern myself, with what this author has said of Mr. Barclay's book; my intent not being to oppose him, but only to take the same liberty, in giving my opinion of that performance, as he has done. I shall, indeed, proceed one step farther than this author, namely,

not

not only give my opinion, but likewise shew, upon what grounds that opinion is founded, as will appear in the following lines. And if I should, in any particular, differ from him, I am persuaded I shall not offend; presuming he will allow, that I have an equal right to dissent from him in my opinion, and to publish the grounds of that dissent, as he has to dissent from me. I shall likewise consider Mr. Barclay's scheme, and performance, what it is in itself, and not what it is, when compar'd with other systems and performances. These things being premis'd, I proceed to observe, that, I have likewise read Mr. Barclay's book, and do really think it contains a *confus'd, absurd scheme of religion*; in which God is consider'd, as dealing with his creatures, not according to the *moral fitness of things*, but from *arbitrary pleasure*. For tho' the author sometimes brings *justice, goodness, truth, &c.* into the case, and argues from these, and, consequently, reasons from the fitness of things, when it turns to the advantage of his argument; yet this is what his scheme, upon the whole, will not comport with, but must be *overthrown* by. However, I shall not enter into a particular examination of all the propositions, laid down in the book referr'd to; but shall single out one, upon which, I think, Mr. Barclay's scheme has an apparent dependence.

#### P R O P O S I T I O N IV.

Concerning the Condition of Man in the Fall.

" *All Adam's posterity, or mankind, both Jew,*  
 " *and Gentile, as to the first Adam, or earthly*  
 " *man, is fallen, wretched, and dead; depriv'd of*  
 " *inward testimony, and the power,*  
 " *of recovering his nature.*



“ nature, and seed of the serpent, which he soweth in  
“ men's hearts, whilst they abide in this natural and  
“ corrupted estate. From whence it cometh, that not  
“ only their words, and deeds, but all their imagina-  
“ tions are evil perpetually in the sight of God, as pro-  
“ ceeding from this depraved and wicked seed. Man,  
“ therefore, as he is in this state, can know nothing  
“ aright; yea, his thoughts and conceptions concern-  
“ ing God, and things spiritual (until he be disjoin'd  
“ from the evil seed, and united to the divine light)  
“ are unprofitable both to himself, and others.

“ That, then, which our proposition leads to  
“ treat of, is,

“ *First*, What the condition of man is in the  
“ fall, and how far incapable of meddling in the  
“ things of God.

“ So that, tho' we do not ascribe any part of *A-*  
“ *dam's* guilt to men, until they make it theirs,  
“ by like acts of disobedience; yet we cannot  
“ suppose, that men, who are come of *Adam* na-  
“ turally, can have any good thing in their na-  
“ ture, as belonging to it, which he, from  
“ whom they derive their nature, had not him-  
“ self to communicate unto them.

“ If, then, we may affirm, that *Adam* did not  
“ retain in his nature, as belonging thereunto,  
“ any will, or light, capable to give him know-  
“ ledge in spiritual things; then, neither can his  
“ posterity. For whatsoever real good any man  
“ doth, it proceedeth not from his nature, as he  
“ is a man, or the son of *Adam*; but from the  
“ seed of God in him, as a new visitation of life,  
“ in order to bring him out of this natural con-  
“ dition; so that tho' it be in him, yet it is not  
“ of him. And this the Lord himself witnesseth,  
“ *Gen. vi. 5.* where it is said, *He saw that*  
“ *every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, was*  
“ *only evil continually.* Which words, as they are

“ very



“ very positive, so are they very comprehensive ;  
 “ observe the emphasis of them. *First*, There is  
 “ *every imagination of the thoughts of his heart* ; so  
 “ that this admits of no exception, of any ima-  
 “ gination of the thoughts of his heart. Se-  
 “ condly, *is only evil continually*. It is neither in  
 “ *some part evil continually*, nor yet *only evil at some*  
 “ *times* ; but both *only evil*, and *always*, and *con-*  
 “ *tinually evil* ; which certainly excludes any good,  
 “ as a proper effect of man’s heart naturally ; for  
 “ that which is only evil, and that always cannot,  
 “ of its own nature, produce any good thing.  
 “ The Lord expresseth this again a little after,  
 “ *Chap. viii. 21. The imagination of man’s heart*  
 “ *is evil from his youth* ; thus, inferring how na-  
 “ tural and proper it is unto him. From which  
 “ I thus argue,

“ If the thoughts of man’s heart be not only  
 “ evil, but always evil ; then, are they, as they  
 “ simply proceed from his heart, neither good in  
 “ part, nor at any time :

“ But the first is true, therefore, the last.

“ Again,

“ If man’s thoughts be always and only evil ;  
 “ then, are they altogether useless and ineffectual  
 “ to him in the things of God :

“ But the first is true, therefore, the last.

“ *Secondly*, This appears plainly, from that  
 “ saying of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, *Chap. xvii. 9.*  
 “ *The heart is deceitful above all things, and despe-*  
 “ *rately wicked*. For who can, with any colour  
 “ of reason, imagine that that, which is so, can  
 “ have any power, of itself, or in any way fit to  
 “ lead a man to righteousness ; whereunto it is,  
 “ of its own nature, directly opposite ? This is as  
 “ contrary to reason, as it is impossible in nature,  
 “ that a stone, of its own nature, and proper  
 “ *motion*, should fly upwards. For as a stone,

“ &

"of its own nature inclineth, and is prone to  
"move downward, towards the center; so the  
"heart of man is naturally prone, and inclined  
"to evil; some to one, and some to another.  
"From this, then, I also thus argue:

"That which is *deceitful above all things, and*  
"desperately wicked, is not fit, neither can it lead  
"a man aright in things that are good and ho-  
"nest:

"But the heart of man is such,

"Therefore, &c.

"But the Apostle *Paul* describes the condition  
"of man, in the fall, at large, taking it out of  
"the Psalmist; *There is none righteous, no not one;*  
"there is none that understandeth, there is none that  
"seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the  
"way, they are altogether become unprofitable, there  
"is none that doth good, no not one. Their throat is  
"an open sepulchre; with their tongues have they used  
"deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose  
"mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet  
"are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are  
"in their ways; and the way of peace have they not  
"known; there is no fear of God before their eyes.  
"What more positive can be spoken? He seem-  
"ed to be particularly careful to avoid, that any  
"good should be ascribed to the natural man.  
"He shews, how he is polluted in all his ways.  
"He shews, how he is void of righteousness, of  
"understanding, of the knowledge of God; how  
"he is out of the way, and in short unprofitable;  
"than which, nothing can be more fully said, to  
"confirm our judgment. For, if this be the  
"condition of the natural man, or of man as he  
"stands in the fall, he is unfit to make one right  
"step to heaven."

I have here set down, at large, that part of the  
fourth proposition, which relates to the question,

viz. whether there is ability, in the *natural man*, to know, and do, either *good* or *evil*? I have likewise recited what the author has offer'd, for the proof of the principles he has here laid down. And tho' he has express'd himself very *darkly* and *confusedly* upon the subject; yet, I think, upon the whole (that is, taking in the other branches of his scheme, and what he has said in other parts of his book; and supposing he intended to be understood, and that there is a meaning and consistency in his words) his sense be will justly expressed, in the two following propositions.

#### PROPOSITION I.

*Man, consider'd as man, or that compound creature, consisting of understanding, of appetite, affection, &c. which sprang from Adam, as his original parent, has no power or ability, at any time, to think, speak, or act that which is good.*

#### PROPOSITION II.

*Man, consider'd as man, or that creature compounded and derived, as aforesaid, is necessarily determined, at all times, either by his own natural composition, or by the agency of the serpent, to think, speak, and act that which is evil.*

Before I proceed to examine these propositions, with regard to the *truth*, or *falsehood* of them, I find it is necessary to observe two or three things, in order to make the way clear before me. And,

*First*, I observe, that as I have given what I judge to be the author's sense, in the two precedent propositions; so I have express'd it, in terms *much stronger* than those he uses. And the reason of it is this, *namely*, that I may reduce the controversy into a narrow compass, by cutting off all occasion for unnecessary disputes about words.

And

And, in this, I think, I have done the author no wrong; because he must intend to express, in his *late and confused way*, what I express more *strongly and clearly*; or else his performance is but an *amusement*, and he is fighting, without an adversary. No, in order to clear this point, I say, either Mr. Barclay did intend to *assert and prove*, that man, in his natural capacity, has no power or ability, at any time, to think, speak, or act that which is good; or he did *not* intend to assert and prove this. If he did not, then, man has natural ability, in himself, to know, and do what will please God, for any thing that this author has asserted, or proved to the *contrary*. So that, tho' *no man can come to the Father, but by the Son*, that is, but in that way in which the Son has declared it to be the will of the Father, that men should come to him, *namely, by keeping God's commandments*, and by *repentance and amendment of life*; there being no other name, or way given among men, but this way given or declared by *Jesus Christ*, by which they may be *saved*; yet they may come, *acceptably to God* without any *internal supernatural light or operation*. And, consequently, there is not that *absolute necessity* for such a supernatural operation, in order to *man's salvation*, as Mr. Barclay's scheme supposes; and, without supposing it, his performance is an amusement. But if he did intend to *assert and prove*, that man has not natural ability to think, speak, or act that which is good; then, my expressing strongly what he expressed loosely can be no *injury* to his cause.

Possibly, the adherers to Mr. Barclay's scheme may here take sanctuary, under the covert of the term *spiritual*, and may reply, that tho' he did intend to assert and prove, that man has no ability in himself, at any time, to think, speak, or act that which is *good*; yet he intended to confine the



term *good* to *spiritual things*, or things pertaining to the *favour of God*; still allowing, that man has power and liberty, with regard to *temporal good*, or the good of this life; and that this is plainly the case, appears from this, and other parts of Mr. Barclay's book.

I answer, That as men sometimes confound things, by making that the *same*, which is really *distinct*; so they sometimes make *distinctions*, where there are none. And thus it is in the present case: here are supposed two sets of powers for the performance of good; one for *temporal*, and the other for *spiritual good things*. But this is a mere fiction, it being by one set of powers only, *viz.* the human composition, by which men perform *all good*, whether it relates to this life, or a better; and by which they please either men, or God. It is the same natural faculty of understanding, by which a man discerns and judges of the truth, or falsehood of these propositions, *viz.* that three times two is six; and that three angels of a right-lined triangle are equal to two rect-angles; and by which he discerns and judges of the truth or falsehood of the propositions and arguments laid down in Mr. Barclay's book. And these, surely, will be allow'd to be *spiritual things*, seeing they are proposed as an explanation, and vindication of the true *christian divinity*. It is by the same natural passion of *fear*, that men are led to guard against the evils of this life, and of another. It is the same natural passion of *hope*, which excites men to prosecute their present or future happiness. It is by the same natural power, that a man loves God and his neighbour; which is the *fulfilling of the law*, and which will render him *acceptable* to his *Maker*, and by which he loves any thing, that renders *this life* agreeable to him. Only the affection is exercised upon different objects, and to  
a different

a different degree; and it becomes either virtuous, or vicious, as it is exercised upon a proper, or an improper object; or, as it is kept within, or is indulged beyond its due bounds. It is the same natural active faculty, or power of self-motion, by which a man uses the members of his body, to commit murder, or to save from death, or the like. The case is the same, with regard to all the parts of our composition, and with regard to all the good which is perform'd by us. And this leads me to request of those men, who *depreciate human nature*, by denying it any ability to do good, as aforesaid, to give a case, in which it will appear, that the natural man, as they express it, has not ability to perform any one branch of goodness, that will render him acceptable to his Maker.

If it should be farther urged, that I have not expressed what they intend by the term *spiritual*; my answer is, when they will please to explain this term, in an *intelligible* way, and shew what they intend by it, I shall then, and not till then, be able to reply. Again,

Either Mr. Barclay did intend to assert and prove, that man, consider'd as man, is necessarily determined, at all times, to think, speak, and act that which is evil; or he did not intend to assert and prove this. If he did not, then, man, in his natural state, has power, and is at liberty, not only to *do*, or *omit* doing evil; but also to *do*, or *omit* doing good; even as a man who has power, and is at liberty to tell a *lie*, must, in the nature of the thing, have power, and be equally at liberty to relate the *truth*, which is opposed to it. I say, if Mr. Barclay did not intend to assert and prove, as aforesaid; then, man, in his natural state, has power, and is at liberty to do good, or evil, for any thing that he has asserted,



or proved to the contrary. And, consequently, there is not that *absolute necessity* for an internal supernatural operation, in order to *man's salvation*, as Mr. Barclay's scheme supposes; and, without supposing it, his performance is an imposition upon his reader. But if he did intend to *assert* and *prove*, that man is, necessarily, determined to think, speak, and act that which is evil; then my expressing strongly what he expressed loosely can be no *injury* to his cause. Whoever examines, with care and impartiality, Mr. Barclay's performance, I think, must grant, that his scheme supposes, and that, to appearance, he endeavours to maintain, that man has not natural ability to do good, and that he is, necessarily, determined to do evil; and that, in consequence of this deplorable state of the human nature, since the fall, he urges the *absolute necessity* of an *internal supernatural light or operation*, in order to *man's salvation*. And, therefore, as I said before, if he did not intend to assert and prove this, then, his performance is an amusement, and he is misleading his reader. But if he did intend to assert and prove, as aforesaid, then, my reducing his sense into two plain propositions, and expressing strongly what he expressed loosely, and confusedly, can be no injury to his cause. And, as imposition, in the present case, is much *worse* than simple error, or mistake; so I shall, in favour to Mr. Barclay, suppose, or take it for granted, that he did intend to assert and prove, tho' erroneously, and innocently, what is laid down in the two foregoing propositions. Again,

*Secondly*, I observe that Mr. Barclay in treating of this subject, distinguishes betwixt the *natural man*, and the *seed of the serpent* in that man; and he ascribes the evil, which man brings forth, sometimes to one, and sometimes to the other, as

its cause. And as he thus varies, with regard to the cause of evil in man; so, when I express his sense of this point, as in the second proposition, I did not charge it upon the one, or the other; but express'd it thus; *Man, consider'd as man, or that creature compounded and derived, as aforesaid, is necessarily determined, at all times, either by his own natural composition, or by the agency of the serpent, to think, speak, and act that which is evil.* I do not make this remark, with a design to insinuate, that the author unfairly play'd fast and loose in this matter; but, on the contrary, I think that as his opinion, in this point, sprang rather from the heat and strength of his imagination, which men are apt too hastily to conclude is a divine impulse, or the act of God upon them, than from a careful examination of the subject; so he was, thro' inattention, led into this confusion. However, the case is the same, with regard to man, who is the instrument in the production of evil. For, whether he is necessarily determined, by his own natural composition, or by the immediate operation of a foreign agent, he is passive in both cases; he doth not act, strictly speaking, but is acted upon; even as a clock, when it strikes, does not act, but is acted upon; whether striking be the effect of the adjustment and composition of the machine, or the immediate operation of some agent upon it. There is, indeed, this difference, with regard to action, as it is the effect of the human composition, and as it is the effect of the agency of the serpent. In the former case, it is chargeable upon the author of that composition; and, in the latter, upon the agent which acts upon it; but, with regard to man, it is the same who does not act, but is acted upon in both cases. Again,

I observe, *thirdly*, that as Mr. Barclay sometimes considers the serpent, as the cause of evil in



man ; so, when I express his sense of this point, as in the *second* proposition, I did not use his terms ; but, to avoid confusion, I express'd it by the *agency* of the *serpent*. And, in this variation, I imagine I have done no injury to his cause ; because, *first*, as he opposes the seed of the serpent to the seed of God in man ; so he considers the seed of God, as an *agent*, inasmuch as this seed, in his scheme, is the *active cause* of that good, which man performs ; man being *passive*, with regard to the production of good, at least in some cases. Now, seeing this author opposes the seed of the serpent to the seed of God in man ; and seeing, by the seed of God, he understands the agency of God ; therefore, I think, it is not unfair in me, nor prejudicial to his scheme, to express his sense of this point, by the *agency* of the *serpent*, and to consider the serpent, as the *active cause* of the evil, which man is the instrument in producing. *Secondly*, Nothing less, than the agency of the serpent, will be to Mr. Barclay's purpose. For if the serpent only *tempts* men, and is not the *agent* which acts upon them, then, man is necessarily supposed to have power, and to be at liberty to *comply* with the temptation, or to *reject* it, and to *perform* that good, which is opposed to it ; which overturns this author's scheme. Again,

I observe, *fourthly*, it may be objected against what I have express'd, as the sense of this author, in the two foregoing propositions ; that Mr. Barclay, in a variety of places in his book, considers man, as a *voluntary agent*, his reasoning supposes him to be such ; and that man has power, and is at liberty to do evil, to suspend the exercise of the active faculty, and at some times, and under some circumstances, to do good, by *co-operating* with God, and being a *co-efficient* with him, in producing that good, which he, *viz.* man, performs.

forms. But, then, all, that this proves, is, that Mr. Barclay's *scheme* and *performance* are full of *confusion* and *contradiction*.

Having thus, prepared the way, by shewing the reasons for, and thereby preventing the objections, which may be made against my *changing* the *terms*, and *fixing* the *sense* of Mr. Barclay's words, as above; I proceed to examine his principles, as contain'd in the two propositions, before laid down. And this I shall do in the following order. *First*, I shall take them for granted, and shew, what will necessarily and unavoidably follow the allowing them. *Secondly*, I shall shew, or prove, that they are erroneous. And, *thirdly*, I shall examine what the author has offer'd to prove and maintain them. And,

*First*, I am to shew, what consequences will unavoidably follow Mr. Barclay's principles, allowing them to be true. But, before I do this, it will be proper for me to state the notion, and shew what it is which *constitutes* an *agent*; and that is *intelligence* and *activity*. By *intelligence*, I mean a capacity of *thinking*, or taking in *ideas*; the subject of such ideas being *motives* or *excitements* to action, or to be at rest, with regard to all such beings, in whom the power of acting resides. And, by *activity*, I mean a capacity or power of *beginning* or *performing* motion or action, or of being at rest, in consequence of those ideas that take place in the understanding, and which are the *ground* or *reason* of such motion or action, or of the suspending the exercise of that power. I say, in consequence of those ideas, which are the ground or reason of such action, &c. for tho' the ideas, which become motives to action, are not the *physical cause* of the action that follows; yet they are *necessary* thereto, inasmuch as the action would not take place, without some reason or motive

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tive to induce to it; it being absurd to suppose, that the active faculty would be exerted, without some *previous reason* to dispose the mind to action; which reason is the *product* of intelligence. And, in order to constitute a *moral agent*, it is not only necessary, that the being should be intelligent, in the lower and less proper sense of the term *intelligent*, as before described; but it is also necessary, that he should be so, in the *higher and more proper* sense of that term; that is, that he should be capable of seeing things in a *moral view*, and thereby of *judging* of the moral fitness or unfitness of actions; and likewise, that he should have power to *act*, or to *refrain* from acting, upon such *moral motives*, as he pleases. I say, both of these are absolutely necessary, to constitute a *moral agent*, because, where either of these is wanting, there can be no moral action; and, where both of these take place, there the being, in which they reside, is capable of acting, or of refraining to act, upon *moral motives*; and, consequently, is a moral agent. As to the word *free*, which is commonly added in this case, this term is wholly superfluous; because every agent is free, in those instances, and so far as he is an agent; a necessary agent being a plain contradiction. This being premised, I proceed to shew the consequence of Mr. Barclay's principles, in the following particulars. And,

*First*, Allowing the two foremention'd propositions to be true; from hence it will unavoidably follow, that, in the doing good, or evil, man is not an *agent*, but a *patient*; the argument stands thus.

If man has not power or ability, in himself, to do good, and if he is, necessarily, determined to do evil; then, in the doing good or evil, he is

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not an agent, but a patient, he does not act, but is acted upon :

But man has not power, in himself, &c.

Therefore, he is not an agent, &c.

In this argument, the major proposition is self-evident, there not being any thing more clear, and evident in itself, than this ; *namely*, that if man has not power, and is not at liberty to do good, or evil ; and yet good and evil are performed in him, or by him ; in this case, he does not act, but is acted upon. The major proposition being proved, the minor is assumed by Mr. Barclay's ; and thus the argument is conclusive, upon his principles. Again,

*Secondly*, Allowing the propositions to be true, it will follow, that man is not the *subject* of government. The argument stands thus :

If man has not power, in himself, to do good, and if he is, necessarily, determined to do evil ; then, he is not the subject of government, nor can he be obliged by any law ;

But man has not power to do good, &c.

Therefore, he is not the subject of government, &c.

The major proposition I prove, thus. Law and government necessarily suppose a subject who has power, and is at liberty to do, or omit doing what is commanded or forbidden ; and, therefore, to pretend to govern, and give laws to other subjects, is most absurd ; so that if man has not power, and is not at liberty to do good, or evil ; then, he cannot, in the nature of the thing, be the subject of government. The major proposition being proved, the minor is assumed by Mr. Barclay ; and thus the argument is conclusive, upon his principles. Again,

*Thirdly*, Allowing the propositions to be true ;

then



then, it will follow, that man is not an *accountable creature*. The argument stands, thus ;

If man has not power, in himself, to do good, and if he is necessarily, determined to do evil ; then, he is not accountable for that good, or evil, which is perform'd in him, or by him :

But man has not power, in himself, &c.

Therefore, he is not accountable, &c.

The major proposition is proved, thus. Accountableness, in the idea of it, necessarily supposes a *trust* lodg'd in some subject ; and likewise a power and liberty *rightly* to *employ*, or to *abuse* that *trust* ; and, therefore, if man is not intrusted with a power and liberty of doing good and evil ; then, it will follow by an unavoidable consequence, that he cannot, in the nature of the thing, be accountable for that good, or evil, which is done in him, or by him. The minor proposition is assum'd by Mr. Barclay. Again,

*Fourthly*, Allowing the proposition to be true ; then, it will follow, that man is not a *proper object* of *reward*, or *punishment*. The argument stands thus :

If man has not power, in himself, to do good, and if he is, necessarily, determin'd to do evil ; then, he is not a proper object of reward, or punishment, with regard to the doing or avoiding either of these :

But man has not power, in himself, &c.

Therefore, he is not a proper object of reward, &c.

The major proposition I prove, thus. Both reward, and punishment carry, in their idea, the supposition of an action, either done, or omitted to be done, by a subject which has power, and is at liberty to do, or omit doing, as aforesaid ; and, consequently, the subject, which has it not, cannot, in the nature of the thing, be the proper ob-  
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ject of reward, or punishment. The minor proposition is assum'd by Mr. Barclay.

As to the clearness and conclusiveness of these arguments, I submit it to every reader; though withal, I think I may venture to say, that my reasoning, as above, is allow'd and justify'd by Mr. Barclay, in his arguments and reasoning against the Calvinists. Having thus shewn, in the first place, what consequences will unavoidably follow Mr. Barclay's principles, allowing them to be true; I proceed,

*Secondly*, To shew, or prove that they are *erroneous*. And this I shall do, *first*, by appealing to the *experience* of all mankind; and *secondly*, by appealing to, and proving it from *scripture*. And,

*First*, I appeal to *all mankind*, whether they do not experience in themselves a power and liberty, arising from their natural composition, to speak the *truth*, or a *lie*, to do *good*, or *evil*, in all the branches of it, as the occasion shall offer, whether it regards their duty to God, their neighbour, or themselves. And, I am persuaded, every man will acknowledge, that he has such a power, and is thus at liberty, except his *religious principles* lead him to believe, contrary to what he experiences in himself. And, this is not *presuming*, or taking the thing for *granted* which is in dispute, any more than it would be, if it should be deny'd, that a man has any natural power to see with his eyes, and hear with his ears, in such a case, to appeal to the *experience* of all mankind, for the *proof* of the *affirmative*; the evidence being the same, in both cases; and Mr. Barclay might, with as much truth, and as good a grace, have deny'd the latter, as the former. And, here I appeal to Mr. Barclay's performance, and to the performances, whether by preaching, or writing, of all who pretend to an internal supernatural light, as supposing

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the truth I here maintain. Mr. Barclay's propositions and arguments, and his reasoning upon them, are *offer'd* and *address'd* to *men*, even tho' they relate to *spiritual things*. But, why to men? Does not this necessarily suppose, that men, as *men*, have ability to discern and judge of the truth or falseness of them, and to direct their actions, accordingly? For to suppose, in this case, that Mr. Barclay address'd himself, and offer'd his arguments and reasoning to God, as the agent which performs all good in, and by man; this is to represent him, as acting the most *childish* and *ridiculous* part, and reflects sadly upon this author. The same may be said of all those, who pretend to an internal supernatural light; they *address* themselves to *men*, they complain of, and condemn their bad actions; they exhort and intreat them to act otherwise; which, necessarily, supposes that those, they address to, have ability to discern and judge of the fitness or unfitness of their conduct, and to guide their behaviour, accordingly. I say, this is necessarily suppos'd, because to suppose otherwise makes the addressers *ridiculous*. Besides, if these addresses are not made to man, as *man*, or as an *agent*, as afore said; then, they must be either to the *serpent*, or to *God*, which, in Mr. Barclay's scheme, are the agents that act in, and by man. If to the former, then, it is God addressing himself to the serpent, because it is God which acts, by man, in these addresses; man having no power, in himself, to perform that which is good. If to the latter, then, it is God addressing himself to himself; God, in the preacher, addressing himself to God, in the hearer; but this is so monstrous, that I imagine no man will abide by it. And, therefore, as I said before, Mr. Barclay, and all pretenders of this kind, will, in their turns, give judgment against them-

themselves, and allow the thing which they deny,  
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*Secondly*, I appeal to, and shall prove, from the *Bible*, the erroneouſness of Mr. Barclay's principles, as laid down in the two propositions I here refer to. Tho' I grant it is an odd way of proceeding, to attempt to prove that from the scripture, which every man *feels*, or *experiences* in himself; it being much the same, as if a dispute should arise, whether man has the use of *speech*, the power of *self-motion*, and the like, to appeal to the *Bible* for the proof of the affirmative; man's natural ability, for the doing and avoiding good and evil, being as much the subject of, and proveable by *experience*, as either of these; or like proving from the *Bible*, that bread is *changed* into flesh, which question comes within the cognizance of, and ought to be decided by our senses; because the terms *bread* and *flesh* are used to express ideas which are *excited* in us, and *conveyed* to us by those senses. For, when a composition of particles of matter is so dispos'd, as to affect our senses in a *particular manner*, when apply'd to them; the idea, which that composition raises in our minds, we express by the term *bread*; and, when a composition of particles of matter is so dispos'd, as to affect our senses in *another* particular manner, when apply'd to them, the idea, which that composition excites in us, we express by the term *flesh*. I say, when matter is thus dispos'd, as to affect our senses in a *particular manner*, when apply'd to them; it then comes under the denomination of *bread*, or *flesh*, or the like. For if we consider matter, *abstractedly* from the disposition it is in to affect our senses in a particular manner, when apply'd to them; this is to consider it in a state, of which we know not any thing. And, consequently, when it is thus abstractedly consider'd,

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it does not come under the denomination of *bread*, or *flesh*, or any other *species*, which matter is distinguished into; because it does not excite, or raise in us, any of those *ideas* which we call by such names. So that to *change* bread into flesh is so to dispose and change a particular composition of particles of matter; which composition, *before* that change, when it was apply'd to the senses, rais'd in us the idea of *bread*; does, *after* that change, when apply'd to those senses, raise in us the idea of *flesh*. Now, suppose a dispute should arise, whether bread is *changed* into flesh; that is, whether a particular composition of particles of matter, which, the *last moment*, being alike apply'd to the senses, rais'd in us the idea of bread; does *this moment*, being alike apply'd to our senses, excite in us the idea of flesh. Would it not, in this case, be exceeding preposterous to appeal to the *Bible*, for the determination of this question? seeing it is evident, that it is not the *Bible*, but the *bringing* or *applying* the *object* to the *senses*, which can, and must *assure* us, whether that object excites in us the *idea* of *bread*, or *flesh*? In like manner, if a dispute should arise, whether man has, or has not, *natural ability*, for the performance of this, or that *good*, or *bad* action; such as the shewing respect to, or the affronting a benefactor; the relieving or adding to the burden of the oppressed, and the like; would it not be alike preposterous, to appeal to the *Bible*, for the determination of this question? seeing it is alike evident, that it is not the *Bible*, but every man's *experience*, which can, and must *assure* him what his *natural abilities* are, or are not, in this case? But as Mr. Barclay has endeavoured to prove his principles, from the *Bible*, which proof I shall examine, in its due place; so I thought it proper to let my reader see, that those principles are

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repugnant to it; and that is all I intend, by proof, in the present case. And,

*First*, The scripture *supposes*, or takes it for granted, as a self-evident proposition, or a proposition which every man experiences the truth of in himself, viz. that every man is enabled, by his natural composition, to do good, or evil; and is at liberty for the choice of either of these. To prove this, at large, would be to transcribe a great part of the Bible, in which this is *evidently* and *necessarily* suppos'd; and, therefore, I shall content myself, and, I hope, satisfy my reader, with producing one text only, which will sufficiently clear this point. Gen. iv. 7. *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.* In the preceding verses, we have an account, that *Cain* and *Abel* brought, each, of them, an offering to the Lord; and the Lord had respect to *Abel*, and to his offering; but unto *Cain*, and to his offering, he had no respect; this rais'd a *resentment* in *Cain*, and he was very wroth, which was visibly shewn, in the change of his countenance. Upon this, the Lord condescended to reason the case with him, in order to convince him of the *groundlesness* and *unreasonableness* of that resentment; and accordingly he address'd himself to *Cain* thus, *Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, thou Cain, the immediate offspring of Adam, if thou had'st brought such an offering, as thy circumstances enabled thee, and as might justly be expected from thee; and if thou had'st brought it with such a temper of mind, as thou mightest and oughtest to have done; should'st thou not be accepted? it would have been wrong in me to have rejected thee and thy offering. And if thou dost not well, that is, if thou dost evil; thou, Cain, who had'st power, and wast at liberty to do the contrary; sin lieth at*

*the door*, Thou oughtest, in *reason*, to expect and reap the fruit of thy folly; and, therefore, thy *resentment* is perfectly *groundless*. Here, I appeal to all men, and particularly to all those who pretend to be under the *influence* of a *supernatural light*, whether the text, I have here produc'd, does not *necessarily* and *evidently* suppose, that *Cain*, and consequently the rest of *Adam's posterity*, had a natural ability to do good, or evil, and was at liberty for the choice of either of these. To suppose otherwise is to charge God *foolishly*, as acting an *unequal* part with his creatures; and *Cain* might justly have reply'd Lord, thy ways are not equal; for if the *serpent* had not brought forth that evil in me, which he did not in my brother, and which it was not in my *power* to *prevent*; and if *thou* had'st brought forth that good in me, which thou did'st in my brother, and which it was not in my *power* to *do*, then had I been *accepted*, as well as he; but now I am *rejected*, for not *doing* and *avoiding* that, which I had not *power* to do, or avoid; therefore, thou hast acted an *unrighteous* part by me, and my *resentment* is *just*. Again,

*Secondly*. The scripture supposes *man* to be the subject of *government*; and, accordingly, it prescribes him laws to be the rule of his actions; commanding him to *love the Lord with all his heart*, and his *neighbour as himself*; and forbids him to murder, or to *slander*, to do *evil to mankind*. Now, it is very ridiculous and absurd, to suppose that God did not give those laws to man, *as man*, or that creature which is the natural seed of *Adam*, or, as Mr. Barclay expresses it, man in the fall; and that man, as such, has not natural ability for their performance; because, this is to represent God as acting the most *childish* and *trifling* part with his creatures; as requiring *brick*, where there are not materials for the making it.



If it should be urg'd, that God gives *supernatural* ability, for the performance of that duty which he requires : I answer, this, in Mr. Barclay's scheme, is not giving ability to *man*, but it is *God* which acts in, and by man, man being *passive* in the production of good ; and, therefore, tho' the *command* is given to *man*, yet *obedience* is perform'd by *God* : which, surely, is most ridiculous. Besides, as to supernatural ability, I fear these are terms with which men *amuse themselves* and *others*, by using them without any idea. For if I should ask the question, whether there is any *new member* added to the body, or any *new faculty* added to the soul ? I am perswaded, they will answer, no ; will it not then, follow, that whatever good a man does, he does it by that *ability* which arises from his *natural composition*, and by which likewise all evil is perform'd by him ? Hear what St. James saith, *With the same tongue bless we God, even the Father ; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth (or from the same agency or spring of action) proceedeth blessing and cursing*, James iii. 9, 10. But supposing God should *add* any new members to the body ; such as a *pair of wings* ; and that, in the use of these, man could fly, with as much ease and swiftness as any of the fowls of the air ; this addition to his composition might, indeed, enable him, in *some instances*, to do that good, or evil, which, without wings, he would not be capable of doing. But, then, this would not effect the present question ; because, strictly speaking, his power and liberty of doing good, or evil would be *still the same* ; that is, he would be still at liberty to exert or suspend the exercise of this *additional power*, or to imploy it, in serving good or bad purposes, as he pleases ; even as he is alike at liberty, with regard to the power of walking,



the use of speech, or any other natural ability he is endow'd with. The case would be the same, if any *new faculty* should be added to the *soul*; man, except his agency were destroy'd, would be at liberty, to *direct* and *employ* it to good or bad purposes, and so to the *production* of good, or evil, as *he pleases*. And, this leads me to observe what a strange conceit men indulge; *namely*, that they give great glory to God, by *depreciating the natural ability* in man, and by ascribing all the good he does to a *supernatural power*. Where as man, when consider'd in his *natural capacity*, is as much the work of God, as any other part of the creation; and all the natural powers that he has, are as *truly derived* from him, as any thing he can receive which is *supernatural*. And, if he is a *voluntary agent*, then, a right use and application of the one is as *valuable* as the other. Man likewise, with regard to his *natural composition*, is excellently constituted to answer the great and wise purpose he was created for: and whosoever says the contrary, not only *misrepresents* human nature, but likewise casts *black and odious colours* upon its Maker.

If it should be farther urg'd, that man does not receive any addition to his composition, neither does God act without the agency of man; but God *co-operates* with *man*, and thereby enables him to perform that good, which, without such a co-operation, he could not do. I answer, that this *may* be the case, in some instances; but, generally it is not so. Suppose a man sinks under a heavy burden, and that it is out of his power to help himself; and suppose that another man passes by and sees him in this distress: this man has *strength of body* sufficient to relieve the other; his *natural affection* of pity excites him to it; and his *understanding* shews him the *fitness* and *reasonableness* of that relief; and yet, says the objection, the one

cannot relieve the other, without the *co-operation* of God. But, why so? he has natural ability sufficient for that purpose, and he is at liberty to exert that ability, and so can relieve, if he pleases; and consequently, the objection is perfectly groundless. Besides, suppose God does *co-operate*, as aforesaid, yet this does not *add* to the *virtue* or *goodness* of the being he co-operates with; because the virtue or goodness of any *agent* arises from the right exercise of such power, as is exerted by his *own will* and *agency*; and not in the exercise of such power, as is exerted by the *will* and *agency* of *another*. Suppose I see a man fall into a pit, I pity his case, and put forth all my strength to relieve him, but cannot do it; and suppose that God should kindly interpose in this case, and should either *add* to *my strength*, or *co-operate* with *me*, and by this means the man is reliev'd; this indeed, would be an instance of *God's goodness* to the man in distress; but it makes no alteration, with regard to *me*; my goodness or virtue would be equally the same, whether God had thus interpos'd, or not: I made a right use of the ability I had, without the divine operation, and I did no more than this, with it.

If it should be yet further urg'd, that man does not receive any new ability, strictly speaking; but he receives a *disposition*, to make a right use of the ability that he has, which disposition he would not have, without a *divine supernatural operation*, but would be dispos'd to the contrary. I answer, the strength of this objection lies in the improper use of the word *disposition*; and, in order to remove it, I beg leave to observe, that as *intelligence* and *activity*, as before explain'd, are necessary to constitute a *moral agent*; so man, as man or man in his *natural capacity*, is such an agent. Man has a *natural faculty of understandings*, which qualifies him to see the *nature*, the *circumstances*, and the *consequences* of an action; to see what good

or *bad purpose* it may serve, with regard to himself, or others; and so to *judge* of the moral fitness or unfitness of such actions, and whether the actor renders himself a proper object of the *approbation* or *dislike* of every other intelligent being; and, consequently, of *divine* favour or displeasure. Man has likewise a natural capacity or power of *beginning* or *performing* motion or action, or of being at rest; in consequence of those ideas which take place in his understanding, and which are the *ground* or *reason* of such motion or action, or of the suspending the exercise of that power. And, as *motive*, which takes place in the understanding, and which is the product of intelligence, is *necessary* to action; that is, to the exertion of the active faculty, because that faculty would not be exerted, without some *previous reason* to *dispose* the mind to action; so from hence it plainly appears, that, when a man is said to be *dispos'd* to one action rather than to another, or to be at rest; this properly signifies the *prevailing influence* that one motive has upon a man, for the production of an action, or for the being at rest, before all other motives, for the production of the contrary. For as motive is the ground or reason of every action; so the motive, that *prevails*, *disposes* the agent to the performance of that action. To this I may add. that every motive is what it is in itself, either *good* or *evil*, as these arise from, and are founded in the *nature* and the *relations* of things, antecedent to, and independent of any divine determination concerning them. So that the case will be the same, with regard to these, whether God interposeth by a supernatural operation, and interests himself in the question, or not? This being the state of the case, the question will be, what is meant by the term *disposition*, in the *objection*? seeing it affirms that a man can-

not

not make a right use of the ability that he has, except God, by a *supernatural operation*, gives him a *disposition* so to do. And the answer, I think, must be this; *namely*, that God's giving a disposition, in the present case, must signify either, *first*, the giving a power to *distinguish* betwixt one motive and another, and so to *judge* of their moral fitness and unfitness; or, *secondly*, a power to act from *right* motives, when such are present to the mind; or, *thirdly*, the *presenting* such motives to the mind, as are necessary to excite to a right action. If by giving a disposition is meant either of the two first, then, I say, this cannot be the case; because what is here supposed to be given, is what arises from a man's natural composition; and the having these powers is what constitutes him a *moral agent*, as I have shewn above. Take away these powers, or either of them, and he is not the subject of *moral government*, nor can he be *accountable* for his actions, any more than a horse, or an ox, or any other beast of the field. But if by giving a *disposition* is meant the *presenting* such motives to the mind, as are necessary to excite to a right action; and that such actions cannot take place, except those motives are thus *presented*; then, I answer, it is true that a *good* or *virtuous* action cannot take place, without a *proper* motive to excite to it; and that God may, in *some instances*, kindly interpose, and by a *supernatural operation*, present such motives to the mind, as aforesaid; and likewise, that those motives may be the *ground* or *reason* of such good actions. But then it is to be observ'd,

*First*, That such a supernatural operation is not always necessary to the production of good, because the fitness or unfitness of some actions is so *plain* and *visible*, that he who *runs* may distinguish it, at a *single glance*, if I may thus speak. Sup-



pose I see my neighbour fall down in a swoon; in this case, do I need a supernatural operation to *remind me*, that it is right and fit that I should speedily interpose, and use my endeavour for his recovery? no, certainly. And, thus it is with the generality of human actions, except the use of our natural faculties be perverted, by some false principles of religion, or the like. And when that is the case, then, indeed, there needs a supernatural operation, or something stronger, if such a thing can be, to remind us of the fitness or unfitness of some actions; and so to reduce us to a right exercise of our faculties. For when men's natural faculties are thus misled, then the most pitiful object will not excite pity, nor obtain relief, from the most tender and effeminate constitutions; but rather the contrary, as is abundantly evident, from the burning of Protestants in Popish countries; in which cases, the cries and groans of the innocent sufferers are so far from exciting pity, and obtaining relief, that, on the contrary, they excite joy and triumph in the spectators. I say, when our natural faculties are thus misled, by passion, superstition, and the like, then, if ever, a supernatural operation is necessary, to remind us of the fitness or unfitness of some actions; tho', as far as we can judge, in these cases, it is seldom afforded. Again, it is to be observ'd,

*Secondly*, Supposing God does kindly interpose, and by a supernatural operation, *present* to the mind such motives, as aforesaid; yet such a divine operation is not the *physical*, nor the *moral cause* of the action that follows. For as the fitness of the action arises from the *nature of things*; so our *seeing* that fitness, and *acting agreeably* to it, is no other than the exercise of that ability, which arises from our *natural composition*; and all that God

*does* is making that motive pre-  
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sent to the mind, which is the excitement to action; which motive might have been *presented* some *other way*, and, if it had, it would have produc'd the *same* action. Suppose I see a man in distress, and suppose I have ability, and that it is right and fit I should relieve him. Now, whether I see the *fitness* of the action, by the exercise of mine *own understanding*; or, whether it be *instantly presented* to my mind, by the *operation* of some *foreign agent*, whether *human*, or *divine*; if I relieve the man, it is the *fitness* of the action it self, and not one or any of the ways, beforemention'd, by which that fitness is *brought* to my *view*, which is the *ground* or *reason* of that action. So that by God's giving a disposition in the present case, in the nature of the thing, can only be understood his, instrumentally, bringing or making present to the mind a sense of the fitness of an action; which, strictly speaking, is not giving any disposition at all. But, to proceed,

*Thirdly*, The Bible considers man as *accountable* for his actions; and, accordingly, it *commends* him for his *good* conduct, and *blames* him for his *bad*; and withal, assures him that there will come a time, in which he will be requir'd to give an account of himself, and answer for his good and evil actions. Now, if this be the case, which is so well known, that I shall not quote texts to prove it; then, man has power and ability to do good, or evil; it being most absurd to suppose that God will call one to account for those actions, whether good, or bad, which it was not in his power to do, or prevent, but were perform'd by the agency of another. Again,

*Fourthly*, The scripture considers man as the object of *reward* and *punishment*; it promises reward to his *obedience*, and threatens punishment for his *disobedience*. Now, as neither obedience

nor disobedience can; in the nature of the thing, take place, but where there is *ability* and *liberty* to *keep* or *transgress* the law; so no one, in the nature of the thing, can be the *proper, object* of reward or punishment, without a precedent *free* action, or *refusing* to act, as the *ground* of it. God may, if he please, inflict misery, or give happiness to a creature; but that happiness, or misery, cannot *properly* be call'd reward, or punishment; nor that creature cannot be said to be rewarded, or punished, except he had *voluntarily* chosen to do, or avoid something, which render'd him the *object* of that reward, or punishment. And this is plainly the case, with respect to man, to whom God will render, according to his, *viz.* man's works; not according to what the *serpent*, nor according to what *God himself* hath wrought in, and by man; but according to *man's* works, whether they be good, or evil. Hear what St. Paul saith, *For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad,* 2 Cor. v. 10. Again, if man is *necessarily determin'd* to do evil, either by his own *natural Composition*, or by the *agency* of the *serpent*; he will be *cleared* from guilt, and *excused* from *punishment*, by every *righteous* judge; and it will be laid upon the *maker* of that composition, or upon the *agent* that acts in him. It will not be to the purpose to urge, that man *originally* had power; and was at liberty to avoid evil, and do good; and that this power was *lost* to the *human nature*, in, and by the *fall* of *Adam*. I say, it will not be to the purpose to urge this; seeing it is the same to *Adam's posterity*, whether he had such power, or not; their composition is what it is, *independent* of their will; and as they were no way *accessary* to any such change, so it is not in their

their power to *new-mould* themselves, and make their composition otherwise than it is. And as God placed human nature in such a state, as made it *liable* to this suppos'd *change*, upon the *transgression* of *Adam*; so it would be a most strange procedure in him to charge that evil upon the *posterity* of *Adam*, which, strictly speaking, according to this author's scheme, is a *defect* of *his own work*. And, this leads me to enquire, how does it appear that *human nature* has *suffered* such a *change*, as is here suppos'd? Is not his composition *new*, as in the *beginning*? Has he not the same *members* in his body, and the same *faculties* in his soul, and the same *exercise* of those faculties? Wherein, then, is this mighty change? Why herein is a marvellous thing, man has suffer'd the afore said *change*, and yet continues the *same*, as before. Again, if man has not power in himself to think, speak, or act that which is good; and if all these are the product of the *agency* of God in him; then, to him that *worketh* is the *reward due*, and, consequently, it is not *man*, but *God himself*, which, in the fitness of things, is the *proper object* of reward, in this case. But as we are assur'd, from the nature of the thing, and likewise from the *Bible*, that *the Judge of all the earth will do right*, and that he *will render to every man according to his, viz. man's works*; Prov. xxiv. 12. Matt. xvi. 27. 2 Tim. iv. 14. So from hence it will follow, that *man*, or that creature which is the *natural seed* of *Adam*, is the *agent* in performing all that good, or evil, which is the natural and proper ground of reward, or punishment. Thus, I think, I have made good what I propos'd in the second place, and have shewn the *erroneousness* of Mr. Barclay's principles. I proceed,

*Thirdly*, To examine what he has offer'd to *prove and maintain* them, And, *first*, he urges

Gen.



Gen. vi. 5. where it is said, *He, viz. God, saw that every imagination of the thoughts of his, viz. man's, heart, was only evil continually.* But, surely, if the author had not been strongly *prejudic'd*, in favour of the principles he was maintaining; and if he had but freely exercis'd that ability, which he had, as *man*, or which arose from his *natural composition*, in a careful examination of the subject before him; then, I am persuaded, a man of his sagacity would have seen that this text was not to his purpose. The paragraph is as follows. *And God saw, that the wickedness of man was great in the earth; and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, was only evil continually; and it repented the Lord, that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me, that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.* Again, the same thing is express'd, in the 11, 12 and 13 verses: *The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence; and God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence thro' them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.* In these verses, we have an account that God threatened to destroy the earth, that is, the inhabitants of the earth, by a flood, in the days of *Noah*; and likewise we have the reason assign'd, why God would bring this desolating judgment upon the earth, at that time; namely, because, at *that time*, the *wickedness of man* was great in the earth; *all flesh*, that is, the bulk of mankind, had corrupted their ways before God, and the earth was filled with violence thro' them. Man is a creature excellently constituted to answer

all the purposes of *social felicity*, and to act a part *suitable to*, and *becoming* that reason and understanding, which God hath given him to guide his steps; and, when he does this, he *gives glory* to his *Maker*, even as the proportion and conveniences of a building *give glory* to the *architect*. And as man is thus capable of giving glory to God; so he is capable of the *contrary*, that is, he is capable of acting a *disagreeable* and *hurtful*, or, in other words, an *unsociable* part in the creation; and of acting *contrary* to that *light*, which God hath given him to direct his ways; and, thereby, of doing *great dishonour* to his *Maker*. And this was the case of the bulk of mankind, in the *tenth generation*; the thought of their hearts; and the work of their hands, was for each other's *hurt*; so that the earth was fill'd with *violence thro'* them. And as mankind had thus *corrupted* their ways before God, at *that time*, which gave occasion for those strong expressions, that *every* imagination of the thoughts of their heart was *only evil continually*; so this drew on them that desolating judgment, by which they were destroyed from off the earth. God repented that he had made them, that is, he did what is the product of repentance in men, when they undo, as far as it is in their power, what they repent of. So, in this case, God did undo, that is, he destroyed his own work. This, I think, is a fair representation of the case; in which it appears, that the words, urg'd by Mr. Barclay, were not design'd to express the *nature of man* in the *fall*; but, on the contrary, they express the *great wickedness* of the *tenth generation*, and are urg'd as a *reason*, why the flood was brought upon them. To this I may add, that, if these words were design'd to express the state of human nature, then, as *that nature was the same in every generation since the fall*; so those words cannot be a reason  
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for bringing the flood in the *tenth generation*, in particular, which it is plain they were urg'd for, rather than in any of the preceding generations ; because the same reason took place in the *ninth, eighth*, and in *every generation* before it.

If it should be urg'd, that, in the *tenth generation*, men *resisted* the actings of God upon them, more than they did in the generations before it ; and, therefore, that generation became *more vile* than any that preceded it ; I answer, that as, upon Mr. Barclay's principles, man is *necessarily determin'd* to do evil ; so from hence it will follow, that whatsoever *resistance* there may be in him to that which is good, or to the actings of God upon him ; yet such resistance cannot be *fairly*, and in *justice*, *charg'd* upon him, as his *own*, or be put to *his* account. For as it is not in his power to *restrain* the evil disposition of the *serpent*, when he acts in him ; so neither is it in his power to *restrain* any resistance to good, which may arise from his *natural composition* ; and, consequently, the *tenth generation* was altogether as *excusable* as any generation before or after it. For tho' there may be more good, or evil, shewn forth in one person, or in one generation, than in another ; yet this makes no difference, with regard to *man*, when he is consider'd, *abstractedly* from those *agents* that act upon him ; seeing the human nature, with respect to its inability to do good, or evil, is the *same* in *every person*, and in *every generation*, since the fall. And, therefore, the *ground* of that difference, *namely*, that one person, or one generation, is more vile than another, must be, either that God acts more *powerfully* in one person, or in one generation, than another ; or else, that the *serpent* operates *more weakly*, and makes *less resistance* in one person, or in one age, than in another ; but, which ever of these

these is the case, it makes no alteration, with regard to man, because he does not act, but is acted upon in both cases. And, therefore, to talk of being *passive*, in this case, as Mr. Barclay does, is very absurd; because, when we are passive by *choice*, with regard to the *agency* of another, which is the present case, there must, in the nature of the thing, be a *power* and *liberty* of *concurring*, or *resisting*; which *concurrence*, or *resistance*, is a *good* or an *evil* action in us, as it is intended to *contribute to*, or to *prevent the good*, or *evil*, which that other agent is prosecuting. So that here is a power and liberty of doing good, or evil, which Mr. Barclay's scheme will not admit. Tho' by the way, we *seem* to *assume* too much to ourselves, when we consider ourselves as being *voluntarily passive*, or of *concurring*, or *resisting*, with regard to the *divine agency*. For if *God works*, who can let? If he undertakes to perform a thing by his *own agency*; what agent is there in *heaven*, or *earth*, or *hell*, which can *withstand him*, by opposing his power to God's power? And if we suppose that the *natural man* can *withstand God*, by opposing his agency to God's agency, and his power to God's power, *when acting in him*; this, I think, is to *magnify the power of man* above what is *meet*, and which, surely, does not suit our author's scheme. But to return;

As to Mr. Barclay's *sylogisms*, which are under this head of proof, it must be granted, that the conclusions are justly infer'd from the premises; but then, all that these prove is this, *namely*, that *evil thoughts* are not *good thoughts*, neither in *part*, nor at *any time*; and that *evil thoughts* are *useless* and *ineffectual* to a man, in the things of God.

If it should be urg'd, that these arguments prove more than I here allow, inasmuch as the premises set forth, not only that man has *evil thoughts*,



thoughts, but also that his thoughts are *only* and *continually* evil ; and, consequently, there is more in the conclusions, than I have inferr'd from those premises. I answer, these conclusions are the author's, and not mine, and I only allow that they are *justly* inferr'd ; but if we conclude more from the premises than the author has done, as the objection supposes we ought to do, then, I say, that the *minor* propositions are not *proved*, in the foregoing arguments. For tho' the text saith, that *every* imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was *only* evil *continually* ; yet these words are plainly a *loftiness* of speech, in which, there is more in the expression, when taken *strictly*, than was intended by the speaker. And that this is the case is evident from the history, of which those words are a part ; where we are oblig'd, if we will make the story consistent, to understand these, and several other *general* expressions, in a *limited* sense. Thus, the history sets forth, that *all* *flesh* had corrupted its way upon the earth, and yet it must be suppos'd to *exclude* Noah out of this *all* ; seeing it declares him to be a *just* man, and *perfect* in his generation, tho' he was a *branch* of that *flesh*, which, when the term is taken *strictly*, it must *include* him. Thus, again, it represents God, as declaring that the end of *all* *flesh* was come before him ; and yet, surely, it will be allow'd, that *Noah* and his *family* were *excepted*, seeing they were *preserved* from the *destruction* threatened. And, thus it is in the case under consideration, wherein the words *every*, *only*, and *continually*, are to be understood in a *limited* sense, as expressing what *generally* took place, tho' not so generally, as to admit of no *exceptions*. This is evident from the character given of *Noah*, who, tho' he was a part of mankind, yet he was a *just* man, and *perfect* in his generation ; which, surely, does suppose, that

he had *some good thoughts in his heart*, at *some times* at least. Besides, Mr. Barclay's business was not to prove what man doth, or doth not do; but what he *cannot do*; and, instead of proving the latter, he attempts to prove the former. It is just the same, as if I should deny that man can speak truth, and then should urge the following argument to prove it.

If man always tells lies, then, he never speaks truth;

But man always tells lies,

Therefore, he never speaks truth.

Now, tho' the conclusion is here justly inferr'd from the premises; yet the argument is not to the purpose. For tho' man does always tell lies, and this proves that he never speaks truth; yet it does not prove that he *cannot speak truth*; which is the point this argument is brought to maintain. And this is Mr. Barclay's case. He asserts, that man has not power, in himself, to think, speak, or act that which is good; and this he attempts to prove, by shewing what man does, and not what he *cannot do*, which was his point. But to proceed,

Secondly, Mr. Barclay urges *Jeremiah xvii. 9. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.* But this text, when examin'd, I imagine, will appear as little to his purpose, as the former. The paragraph is as follows. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.* It is here observ'd, that as the heart is the seat and source of wickedness in man; so it is capable of

one desperate piece of wickedness, viz. *deceit*, by which man conceals his other guilt, and thereby disguises himself, and deceives his neighbour. It is farther observ'd, that tho' men may thus wickedly deceive one another; yet they cannot possibly deceive their Maker, because to him the most secret recesses of their hearts lie open; and, consequently, in the issue, they deceive themselves, seeing God, who knows the deceit which is lodg'd in their hearts, will render unto them according to their works, and according to the fruit of their doings; so that their hope and expectation will be *disappointed*, even as a partridge is disappointed that sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not. This, I think, is the sense of this place, and all that is intended to be set forth by it. And, as the scriptures represent the heart, as the seat and source of wickedness in man; so they likewise represent it as the *seat* and *source* of that which is good in him; and particularly of that good, namely, *uprightness* and *integrity*, which is oppos'd to the great evil of deceit, beforemention'd. *Job xxxiii. 3. My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart. 2 Kings xx. 3. I beseech thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect, or upright heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. Luke vi. 45. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaketh. Chap. viii. 15. But that on the good ground, are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.* And as the heart is consider'd, as the seat and source of both good and evil in man; so *Solomon's* advice, in this case, is, *Prov. iv. 23. Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.* To this I may add, that,

that, if God had intended to represent that deceit and wickedness, which is here referr'd to, as the *natural and necessary* product of man's heart, he would not have represented himself, as taking cognizance of the actions which are produc'd by it; because this is representing himself, as acting the most *unrighteous* part by his creatures, in charging them with actions which were out of their power to prevent, as much out of their power, as it is out of the power of a stone to fly upwards, which is Mr. Barclay's similitude in the case, and which were more properly *his own actions*, as being the *necessary product* of that composition which he was the *author* of. As to Mr. Barclay's syllogism, which is under this head of proof the fallacy of the argument lies in this; it *supposes*, or takes for granted, that the heart in man cannot be the seat and source of *both evil and good*; but this is a mistake, as I have observ'd above. The *same heart* which produces *evil thoughts*, and is the spring of *evil actions* at one time, may likewise produce *good thoughts*, and be the spring of *good actions* at another; and this men might be easily convinc'd of, if they would but observe the workings of their own minds, and examine more carefully their natural frame and composition. Again,

Thirdly, Mr. Barclay urges the words of St. Paul, Rom. iii. 10. as quoted from Psalm xiv. and Psalm liii. *There is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable; there is none that doth good, no not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues have they used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in*



*their ways. And the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.* The Apostle's business, in this place, is, to shew the *groundlessness* of that opinion which the *Jews* had gone into, *viz.* that they were the *only people* which pleased God, by the observation of that *law* which *Moses* deliver'd; and that *they only* were entitled to his *future favours*. And this he does, by observing, *first*, that the *Jews* were *as vile*, and altogether *as inexcusable*, in transgressing the *Mosaic* law, as the *Gentiles* were, in transgressing the law of nature; and that the *Gentiles* were *as good* and *as acceptable* to God, in their submitting to the law written in their hearts, as the *Jews* were, in submitting to the law given by *Moses*. And as the *Jews* and *Gentiles* stood upon a *level*, in this respect; so the Apostle observ'd, *secondly*, that neither of them could have any *legal* title to *justification*, inasmuch as they were *all transgressors*; and, consequently, that the justification of both must be of *grace*, and not of *debt*. Mankind, made up at that time of *Jew* and *Gentile*, are *voluntary agents*, who, by their natural composition, are qualified to *discern* and *do* both *good* and *evil*; and this renders them *accountable* for their actions, which otherwise they could not be; it being most *unreasonable* and *absurd* to suppose a creature answerable in a case, in which he has not ability to know and do what he is accountable for. And as man is thus answerable for his conduct, so God hath appointed a day, in which he will *judge* him in *righteousness*; and, finally, *acquit him*, or *condemn him*, whether he be *Jew*, or *Gentile*, according as his behaviour has been, whether *good*, or *evil*. And, as acquitment or justification must be either of *grace*, or of *debt*; so the Apostle affirms, that it is *not* of the *latter*, but of the *former*, both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, inasmuch as they

they are *all transgressors*. This is the purport of the Apostle's argument and reasoning, and this is what he undertakes to prove. And as he was writing to *Jews*, or rather to the *Judaizing Christians at Rome*, so he chose to convince them, by a testimony, which he presum'd they would allow, as being a Prophet and writer of their *own nation and religion*, viz. *King David*, who sets forth the prevailing wickedness of mankind, according to the usage of the Eastern countries, in those *strong terms*, which Mr. Barclay urges, for proof of his point. So that neither St. Paul nor David intended to set forth the inability of human nature in the fall, in the words referr'd to; but, on the contrary, they design'd to express the general wickedness of mankind, both among *Jews and Gentiles*, which necessarily suppos'd their *natural ability* to do good, or evil, as aforesaid. To this I may add, if the Apostle had intended to express the state of man in the fall, in the words referr'd to; then, it will follow, that *every natural man, every individual*, his mouth will be full of *cursing and bitterness*, his feet will be swift to *shed blood*, &c. which, surely, is notoriously *false, in fact*.

Thus, I have gone thro' what I propos'd, and have shewn, *first*, what consequences will unavoidably follow Mr. Barclay's principles, allowing them to be true. *Secondly*, that they are erroneous: And, *thirdly*, I have shewn the weakness and insufficiency of what he has urg'd, to prove and maintain them.

I shall add but one thing more, viz. if any man should reply, in the common way, to what I have here offer'd, by urging a collection of texts of *scripture*, as containing in them Mr. Barclay's principles: My answer, before-hand, is this, either those texts, when *rightly understood*, are consistent

with the *nature* and the *truth* of *things*, or they are *not*; if they are, then, they cannot express Mr. Barclay's *principles*, because those principles are *repugnant* to the nature and truth of things, as I have largely shewn: but, if they are *not*, then, I presume, all men will allow the *consequence*, viz. that such texts *cannot* be of any weight, in the present question.

To conclude, I heartily wish that all pretenders to supernatural light would be modest in their assumptions, lest they father their own absurd and contradictory conceits upon the unerring Spirit of God.

Thus, Sir, in compliance with your desire, I have laid before you my thoughts on this subject, and submit them to your consideration.

*I am, S I R,*

*Your much obliged*

*humble Servant, &c.*



# TRACT XXIV.

*Human Nature vindicated :*

OR A

R E P L Y

TO

Mr. *BEAVEN*'s Book,

ENTITLED,

Supernatural Influences necessary to Salvation;  
being a Vindication of the fourth Proposition  
of *Robert Barclay*'s Apology. Wherein is shewn,  
That Man, in his natural Capacity, is a *Moral*  
*Agent*; that he has Power, and is at Liberty to  
do both *Good* and *Evil*; and, consequently, can  
render himself either acceptable, or displeasing  
to his maker. In a second Letter to a Friend.  
Humbly offered to the Consideration of the  
People called *Quakers*.

S I R

**I**N my former letter, I gave you my opinion  
of Mr. *Barclay*'s performance, with regard to  
*man's natural ability since the fall*; and likewise  
the grounds and reasons, upon which that opi-  
nion is founded. And as I proposed it to publick  
consideration, so it has given occasion to Mr. *Bea-*  
*ven*, to publish a tract, entitled, *Supernatural In-*  
*fluences necessary to Salvation*, &c. which he is plea-



fed to call an answer to it. I, therefore, now crave leave to wait on you by a second letter ; in order to let you see that this performance of Mr. *Beaver's* is not sufficient to cover the *weakness* and *confusion* of Mr. *Barclays* scheme ; which, I think, will appear in the following lines. And, that I may proceed in an open and fair way, and thereby, render the case easy and plain to my reader, in the following discourse, I think it proper, *first*, to examine, *wherein the question or point in debate lies*, betwixt Mr. *Barclay* and me ; this being a proper expedient to prevent all *wanderings* from the subject, whether on the right hand or the left. And, accordingly, I observe, that

The question betwixt me and Mr. *Barclay* is *not*, whether God does *Sometimes* kindly interpose, and by a *supernatural operation* bring to men's view such useful truths, as they, thro' *stubb, bigotry*, or some other impediment, are ignorant of, or do not attend to ? or, whether by those operations he presents *such motives* to men's minds as are as necessary to excite to good actions, still leaving them perfectly at liberty, as *moral agents*, whether they will hearken to and follow, or whether they will reject those wholesome counsels, as he, by such supernatural operations, or, by the written word, is pleased to lay before them ? Again,

The question is *not*, whether such supernatural operations, as aforesaid, are or may be necessary or expedient to some men's salvation ? I say necessary to some men's salvation ; and, I think, the words of *Christ*, as well as the nature of the thing, will justify me herein ; *The whole*, saith our Lord, *have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*, as in *Mark* ii. 17. *Christ* here distinguishes betwixt righteous men and sinners, that is, betwixt those who make a *right use* of their agency to serve the

purposes of virtue and true goodness, and those who *abuse* their agency to serve the purposes of vice and wickedness. And as he declares himself a *physician*, only to the *latter*; so all his operations, whether internal or external, are directed, to this end, *viz.* to prevail upon men to repent and amend their lives. Again, I say [necessary or expedient] to some men's salvation; not upon the account of any *want* of agency in man, nor for *want* of natural ability to see the unfitness and vileness of his present conduct; nor for *want* of natural ability to act or to refrain from acting, and so to correct and amend his ways: but they are, or may be *necessary* or *useful* to some men's salvation; upon the account of that *ignorance, stupidity, bigotry, selfishness, perverseness*, or the like, which take place in them, and are *bars* to their reflecting upon, and amending their ways. I say, that the question or point in debate, betwixt Mr. Barclay and me, is not either of those points above-mentioned. And this I observe, once for all, and desire that it may be remembered throughout this controversy. And, therefore, whatever in Mr. Beaven's book relates to these points, is to be cast out of the case, as *foreign* to the *present argument*. And, when that is done, I imagine, his performance will not make a *very great figure*, when considered, as under the character of an answer to me. Having thus shewn wherein the question or point in debate does *not consist*, I now proceed to shew wherein it *does*. And, accordingly, I observe, that, in my examination of Mr. Barclay's principles, with regard to man's natural ability since the fall, I reduced his sense of this point into the two following propositions.

## PROPOSITION I.

*Man, consider'd as man, or that compound creature, consisting of understanding, of appetite, affection, &c. which sprang from Adam, as his original parent, has no power or ability, at any time, to think, speak, or act that which is good.*

## PROPOSITION II.

*Man, consider'd as man, or that creature compounded and derived, as aforesaid, is necessarily determined, at all times, either by his own natural composition, or by the agency of the serpent, to think, speak, and act that which is evil.*

Here I observe, upon a supposition, that I have justly and truly represented Mr. Barclay's sense in the above propositions; then the question or point in debate is apparently this, *viz.* whether *man*, *in his natural state since the fall, is an agent, or a patient?* that is, whether the *good* and *evil* which is performed in, and by man, be the effect and product of his *own* will and agency, or of the will and agency of another? So that the question at present is, whether I have truly represented Mr. Barclay's sense, or not? With respect to which, I observe, that, in my Examination of Mr. Barclay's Principles, &c. I shewed the *grounds*, upon which I proceeded in fixing his sense, as above. And, as Mr. Beaven has not taken the pains to examine them, but has quoted a *proposition* from Mr. Barclay, and has set up as a *standard*, by which his sense is to be judged of; so I am content, that the point in debate should be tried by it. But, that I may proceed regularly, in introducing the abovementioned proposition, I observe, that after Mr. Beaven had complained of

of me, that I had not quoted all the fourth proposition, &c. (tho' the remainder of the proposition, which I omitted, related to other things, with which the point I undertook to examine was not concerned; and, for that reason, I omitted it) he proceeded to quote from Mr. Barclay, more largely than I had done; and, at last, sums up the whole in the following proposition:

"R. B. affirms and maintains, that man has power and ability, during a day of mercy and grace afforded to all men, thro' the supernatural influence and enlivening aid of Jesus Christ, whereby man is put in a capacity of voluntary agency, to think, speak, and act that which is good. See Apology, pages 114, 115, 116, 117; 132, 133; 147, 148, 149, 150, 151."

I have not examined Mr. Barclay's book, to see whether this proposition is put down in the same words, in the pages here referred to, or whether it may be fairly deduced from what Mr. Barclay has said in those pages; but take it upon trust from Mr. Beaven, that either they are every words of Mr. Barclay, or else that they express the true sense of what he has said; presuming that Mr. Beaven would not misrepresent the author he was defending. And, as the above proposition is, by the mutual consent both of Mr. Beaven and me, made the touchstone, by which Mr. Barclay's sense is to be tried; so I shall understand the terms of which it is composed in their plain and obvious sense, that is, in the sense which common usage has affixed to them. And, accordingly, I observe, that, in this proposition, there are two things maintained; the one is expressed, and the other implied. The thing expressed is, that man, thro' the supernatural influence and enlivening aid of Jesus Christ, is put in a capacity of voluntary agency. The thing implied is, that man consider



considered abstractedly from, and antecedent to that supernatural influence, is not in a capacity of voluntary agency; and, consequently, that he is a mere patient, who does not act, but is acted upon. It is the same as if I should say, that my Lord King, by, or thro' the grace of his Majesty King George, is made a Peer of Great Britain. Now, in this proposition, there are two things maintained; the one is expressed, the other is implied. The thing expressed is, that my Lord King, by the grace of his Majesty, is made a Peer of Great Britain. The thing implied is, that my Lord King, before his Majesty's favour to him, as aforesaid, was not a Peer, but only a commoner of Great Britain; for, if he had been a Peer, antecedent to his Majesty's favour, then, that grace could not possibly make him to be what he was before. And this is the very case, with respect to the proposition I have now under consideration; for, if man is, by a supernatural influence, put in a capacity of voluntary agency; then, it will unavoidably follow, that man, consider'd abstractly from, and antecedent to that supernatural influence, or in the language of Mr. Barclay, man in the fall, is not in a state or a capacity of voluntary agency. Because such a supernatural operation cannot possibly put him in a state or capacity, which state he was in, antecedent to that operation. And, consequently, upon Mr. Barclay's principles, man, in his natural state is a mere patient; for betwixt these, viz. agent and patient, there is no medium. And tho' the word *voluntary* is annexed to the term *agent*, in the above proposition, yet that does not help the case; because every agent is free or voluntary in those instances, and so far as he is an agent: a necessary agent being a manifest contradiction. Thus, it appears from the premises, that *Beaven* has urged, that

presented Mr. Barclay's sense, in the two propositions I have expressed it by, viz. that *man, as he is in the fall, has no power or ability to do good, and that he is necessarily determined to do evil.* I say, necessarily determined, &c. For, tho' Mr. Barclay has not expressed himself in those very terms, yet it is in terms which are equivalent to them; for he saith, that, *as a stone is prone and inclined to move down, towards the center; so the heart of man is prone and inclined to evil, &c.* (See the explanation of the fourth proposition in Mr. Barclay's Apology.) Now the *proneness* or *inclination* which is in a *stone* to move down, towards the center, is not such a *proneness* or *inclination* as is in *man* to *liquor*, when he is *thirsty*; because this *proneness* supposes in man a *power* and *liberty*, either to indulge or controul that inclination; whereas the *proneness* which is in a *stone* to move down, towards the center, supposes *necessity*; the *stone* having no *power* or *liberty* to *check* or *indulge* that inclination; and therefore, as *man*, according to Mr. Barclay, is prone and inclined to evil, *in the like manner* as a *stone* is prone and inclined to move down, towards the center; so this *proneness* and *inclination*, in *man*, must be the same as *necessity*. And tho' Mr. Beaven has urged the above proposition, as the *sum* of what Mr. Barclay has said upon the point I have under consideration; yet he intended thereby to shew; that I had misrepresented Mr. Barclay's sense, which is a little surprising; because he takes Mr. Barclay's proposition in one view, intending thereby to destroy or make void the same proposition in another view.

If it should be urged, that Mr. Beaven has quoted from Mr. Barclay's book several paragraphs, wherein the *agency* of the natural man is only avowed; I answer, this is what I have already allowed, in my Examination of Mr. Barclay's Principles,



ciples, &c. and, therefore, Mr. *Beaven's* quotations were *needless*. But then, what will follow from hence? why, truly, nothing more nor less than this, *viz.* that Mr. *Barclay's* scheme is *confusion*, and a *contradiction* to itself. Besides, the *fundamental principle*, in Mr. *Barclay's* scheme, I take to be this, *viz.* that *man, in his natural capacity, cannot do good, without a supernatural influence*. And if so, then, man, in his natural state, must, upon Mr. *Barclay's* principles, be destitute of *moral agency*. And, consequently, I have justly and truly represented his sense of the point in question, in the two propositions I have expressed it by. Moral agency consists in a power and liberty to *do, or avoid doing* all that good and evil, considered as such, which comes within the reach of that agency; and, therefore, to say, that a moral agent cannot do good, *without a supernatural influence*, is to say a manifest contradiction; except the agent be placed in such circumstances, as that no good action can possibly come within the reach of his agency; which, surely, is not the case of *man*. *Vain and trifling*, therefore, is that pretence, *viz.* that Mr. *Barclay* allows *moral agency* to the natural man; because such an allowance is *inconsistent* with, and *destructive* of the forementioned fundamental principle of his scheme. This is what I would particularly recommend to the consideration of Mr. *Barclay's adherents*; and I presume it will be allowed, that they ought either to clear his scheme from that *confusion* and *contradiction* I here charge upon it; or else to give up a scheme which cannot be defended. Upon the whole, it evidently appears that the question or point in debate, betwixt Mr. *Barclay* and me, is, as I have stated it above, *viz.* whether man, in his natural capacity, is an agent,

agent, or a patient; which was the first thing I propos'd to enquire into. I proceed, next,

To examine, on which side of this question the truth lies. And tho' I think I might very fairly excuse myself from offering any thing, in defence of that side of the question which belongs to me, seeing I have already proved the agency of man, in my Examination of Mr. Barclay's Principles, &c. and Mr. Beaven has not produced the shadow of a proof, with respect to the contrary; yet, as the question is now before me, I shall offer what follows. By man in his natural state, I mean man consider'd barely *as man*, and as the kind has been propagated down from *Adam* to this present time, without any thing superadded. And here I presume it will be allowed, that the idea, annex'd to the term *man*, contains a *body* fitly organized and formed, in the general, as all our bodies are; and that this body is actuated by a *mind*, whose principle faculties are *intelligence* and *activity*. Intelligence, by which it is capable of thinking or taking in ideas, of reflecting upon things past, present, or to come, according as it has received informations, and of looking into the nature and the consequences of things, and thereby of forming a judgment of the fitness or unfitness of actions; and a faculty or power of *self-motion* or *action*, by which it moves and directs the body in that way, and to serve such purposes, as it intends. And as the idea, which we fix to the term *man*, arises from the *human composition*, as aforesaid; so that composition is the effect or produce of *nature*, and not of a supernatural influence; that is, it is the produce of those laws by which the natural world is governed, and not the effect of a supernatural influence, which operates above, or contrary to those laws. And as *man* is thus naturally compounded, so he is hereby



hereby constituted a *moral agent*, has power or is at liberty for the chusing or refusing, for the doing or avoiding, either *good*, or *evil*; and, as such, he is *accountable* for his actions, and is capable of *approving* or *disapproving* himself to *God*. And as the aforesaid composition is what constitutes the *natural man*, so our experiencing in ourselves, that we are thus constituted, *proves* to us that we are, in our natural state, *moral agents*. Yea, it is by our experiencing those powers in ourselves, by which we *prove* to ourselves our very being. How can Mr. *Beaven* prove to himself his own *existence*, but by experiencing in himself the principles of *intelligence* and *activity*, acting upon, and directing the motions of that body which he considers as part of himself?

If it should be urged, that tho' man, in his natural capacity, is an agent, yet his agency is confined to things *natural* and *rational*; and that, with respect to things *spiritual*, he is *put in a capacity of voluntary agency*, by a *supernatural influence*. To which I answer, that *agency in man* is, at *all times*, and in *all instances* and *cases*, one and the same thing; that is, it is the same active faculty or power of self-motion, and the same intellectual faculty which excites to, and directs that motion, in *all the actions of human life*, whether those actions be *natural*, *rational*, or *spiritual*; or under any other distinction which Mr. *Barclay* has used, or which his advocates shall be pleased to use or invent. And tho' the human understanding may be enlightened, by a *supernatural influence*, that is, it may, by this means, have such truths brought to its view, which otherwise it might have remained ignorant of, or might not have attended to; and tho' those truths may become the *ground* or *reason* of action to man; yet this does not affect his *liberty*, nor give him any *new agency*; he

is just the same creature as he was before, in that respect; his actions are performed in the same way, by the same natural faculties of intelligence and activity, as they were, antecedent to that *illumination*. And to suppose the contrary is to suppose *two* sets of powers in man, which are the *springs* of action in him, as I have already observed in my Examination of Mr. *Barclay's* Principles, &c. And tho' there is a variety of impediments, such as *stoltz*, *bigotry*, and the like, which are *bars* to the enlargement of human knowledge; and tho' there is a variety of *ways* by which that knowledge is enlarged, yet that does not alter the case, with respect to the *intellectual faculty* itself. The faculty, properly speaking, is not *enlarged* or *diminished*, by the enlarging or diminishing of the *objects* upon which it is exercised; nor from the *different kind* of objects which it takes in, whether natural, or spiritual; nor yet from the *different ways* in which it receives its informations; the faculty, in all these cases, being *no more* than a natural faculty; and a judgment, formed upon those representations made to the mind by a supernatural influence, is the *judgment* of that *natural faculty*. And, if action follows such a judgment, *that action* is performed by man's natural faculty or power of self-motion, excited and directed by his intellectual faculty, as aforesaid. Thus, I have shewn, that, by man's *natural agency*, he performs *all the actions* which are performed by him, whether natural, rational, or spiritual, as Mr. *Barclay* has been pleased to distinguish them. And if, after all this, Mr. *Barclay's* advocates will still maintain that man is put in a capacity of voluntary agency, by a supernatural influence; this is to maintain a point not by argument, but by *bare assertions*; it is so, because they will have it to be so. And,

Tho' Mr. *Beaven* produces several instances; by which he undertakes to prove that men have been required to do several *good things*, which were *above* their natural ability to perform; yet, I think, he has failed in this, as well as in the rest. He urges the command our Saviour gave to his Apostles, to *go teach all nations*, with an order, that they should *tarry at Jerusalem, until they were endowed with power from on high*, Luke xxiv. 29. Here Mr. *Beaven* considers the preaching of the gospel to all nations, as a *very good work*; and, truly, so it was; and as the Apostles did not understand the languages of all nations, neither could they come at the knowledge of those languages, *instantly*, by any natural ability of their own; so from hence he infers, that they were required to do a good work, which was *above* their natural ability to perform.

To which I answer: That, *antecedent* to their being in a capacity to teach all nations, it was *not their duty* to teach all nations. And, therefore; the execution of that order was suspended, till they were capable of doing it; that is, till God, by a supernatural operation, had brought to their view the *ideas* of those languages, by which the people of every nation conveyed their minds one to another. Here we see, that the Apostles received their ideas of those languages, by a *supernatural influence*; and, thus far, they were *passive*. But, in the execution of the aforesaid commission, in which they were *active*, there is no supernatural influence to be found; their tongues, and the organs and instruments of speech to them, were no more than parts and members of their *natural bodies*. The principles of self-motion, which were the springs of action in them, were no other than those faculties of *activity* which were parts and branches of the *human composition*; and their understandings,

derstandings, tho' antecedently illuminated in an extraordinary way, which excited to, and directed those actions, were no other than their *natural* faculties of intelligence; so that there was nothing supernatural in those actions. As weak are his two other instances, viz. St. Paul's saying, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* And those men, in *Acts* ii. who cried out saying, *Lord, what shall we do?* But does this suppose that what was to be done was above the reach of their agency? No, surely; for if it had, then, vain was that enquiry. But,

Possibly, Mr. *Beaven* will here turn upon me, and tell me that I am preaching up the doctrine of *self-sufficiency*; a snow-ball which he throws at me upon all occasions. And here I must beg leave to ask him, what he means by self-sufficiency? Does he mean that man is sufficient of himself, or by his own natural ability, to perform what comes *within* the reach of *his* agency? If he does, then, I own the doctrine of self-sufficiency; and, if Mr. *Beaven* maintains the contrary, he maintains a *contradiction*; because, to say, that a man *cannot do* what comes within the reach of his *own* agency, is the same as to say, that he cannot do what he *can* do. But, if by self-sufficiency he means an ability to do what is *above* the reach of a man's *own* agency; then, I assure him, that I hold no such doctrine. But I beg leave to remind him, that, whatever is *above* a man's agency, is *not* his duty. God does not require men to do what they *cannot do*; he is not such an unreasonable task-master, as to require bricks, where there are not materials for the making them. It is not my duty to know that the planet *Jupiter* is inhabited, nor yet to take wing and fly to the *moon*; the one, at present, is above my *intellectual* faculty to *discover*, and the other is above my *active* fa-



culty to perform ; and, therefore, neither of them can be my *duty*, in my present circumstances ; the case is the same, in every other instance, whether it relates to *knowledge*, or *practice* ; whatever is *above* our agency, does not come into the *line* of our duty.

Mr. *Beaven*, in like manner, treats with *contempt* what I have \* elsewhere laid down, as a *rule* of action to every *moral agent*, whether *divine*, or *human*, viz. the *moral fitness of things*. But I crave leave to ask him, whether this is not a rule of action to God, and whether it ought not to be so to us ? If he should say that we have another rule, viz. the *word* and *law of God*, to conduct our actions by ; then, I would remind him that the moral fitness of things is the *rule* and *measure* of all divine commands, taking all circumstances and consequences into the case, † as I have elsewhere shewn. And, therefore, a *divine law*, what way soever it be revealed, is not another, but the same law and rule of action with the *moral fitness of things*. Thus, I have gone thro' what came in the *second* place to be considered ; and have shewn, that *man, as man*, or man in his natural capacity, is a moral agent ; and, consequently, that the *truth* is not on Mr. *Barclay's*, but on *my* side of the question. And now I proceed,

To shew, that tho' Mr. *Beaven* has attempted, yet he has not been able to *prove* the contrary ; I say, *attempted* to prove the contrary ; for if he has not attempted to *prove* the *contrary* to what I have now been proving, then, I do not know what he is at. The question or point in debate, betwixt Mr. *Barclay* and me, is, Whether *man, in his natural capacity, is an agent, or a patient* : Whether *the good and evil, which is performed in, and by man,*

\* Supplement to the previous Question.

† Vindication of God's Moral Character.

it, *strictly and properly*, the effect and produce of man's will and agency ; or, whether it be the effect and produce of the will and agency of another. I maintain the former ; and as Mr. Beaven has undertook the defence of Mr. Barclay, in this point, so it is his business to make good the latter ; and what he has said I now come to examine. Tho' I own I am at a loss to know what may be properly called *argument*, in Mr. Beaven's book, and what he will allow me to say is urged in Mr. Barclay's defence, with regard to the question before us ; because there is no direct *arguing* upon the point, but rather a *rambling* upon the subject ; however, seeing Mr. Beaven styles his tract, *A Vindication of the fourth Proposition of Robert Barclay's Apology* ; and seeing that proposition is the ground of the controversy betwixt Mr. Barclay and me ; therefore, I shall consider what Mr. Beaven has said to *incline his readers to be of Mr. Barclay's opinion*, as the argument of his book. And,

*First*, He sounds an alarm of danger, which naturally tends to awaken the *fear* and the *resentment* of his readers. " It seemed clear to my, Mr. Beaven's understanding, that the performance of T. Chubb had a direct tendency to strike at the very vitals and essence of the christian religion ; and to reflect on the stupendous mission and undertaking of Jesus Christ, the Lord of life and glory, with regard to the deliverance of mankind from the bondage of corruption, and bringing them into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." Why, truly, this looks *frightful* ; and upon men, who lay by the use of their *understandings*, it is likely to have its effect ; that is, it is likely to *prevent* all further enquiry. For if men's minds can be thus *prejudiced* against any set of opinions ; if they can be prevailed upon to think that those opinions are vile in them-

selves; and *destructive* to the future happiness of mankind, antecedent to their being proved to be so; then, such proof becomes *needleless*, and all farther enquiry is effectually *barred*. This was the practice of the *persecutors* of old, and has been in every age since. They first represented the principle of their opponents, as most *horrid* and *vile*; as most *dishonourable* to God, and *injurious* to mankind; and, that being once fixed upon mens minds, as all farther enquiry is *needleless*; so the heretick, then, becomes the object of *contempt*, and is thought worthy to be *banished* from human society. Now, tho' such a procedure may be suitable and proper to those who intend to maintain their opinions by *force of arms*; yet, surely, it must be otherwise to those who would do it by *force of argument*. Besides, *truth* does not need to be *defended* in such a way; let her but appear in her native simplicity, and that will be a sufficient *guard* to her. And, as to *error*, may we all say of her what *Joash* said of the Idol *Baal*, if *he be a god, let him plead for himself*, Judges vi. 31. But tho' Mr. *Beaven* has represented my principles, as above; yet I beg my reader to consider the matter, before he gives *vent* to his *passions*; for, as men have sometimes been *frightened* with *shadows*; so, if he does not examine the point, it may possibly be his case here. Man, as I have already *proved*, is, in his natural capacity, a *moral agent*; and, as such, he is capable of *apostatizing*; that is, of abusing his agency to serve the purposes of *vice* and *wickedness*, whereby he exposes himself to the just displeasure of *Almighty God*. And men, in this state of apostacy, are, in the language of the *Bible*, called *sinners*, and are said to be *lost*. Now, the question is, What *Christ* undertakes and to save

day's and Mr. Beaven's scheme sets forth, to put men in a capacity of voluntary agency; because that state they were in, antecedent to his undertaking, and, without it, they could not have apostatized, could not have been sinners; it being absurd to suppose that there can be *sin*, where there is not agency. And, therefore, if supernatural influences are necessary to put men in a capacity of voluntary agency, and, thereby, to render them capable of salvation; then, hereby, they are equally necessary to render them capable of damnation also. So that if the title to Mr. Beaven's book had been run out to its full length, then, it would have stood thus: Supernatural Instances necessary to Salvation and Damnation. For as bare agency does not save or damn men, so it renders them equally capable of either. Thus stands the case, upon Mr. Barclay's principles. Now, if Christ does not save sinners, by putting them in a capacity of voluntary agency, as it is most manifest he does not; then, the question still remains, What he undertook to do, when he came to seek and to save that which was lost?

To which I answer in short; that Christ undertook to save sinners, by using all those methods, whether by internal or external operations, which are consistent with, and proper to work upon moral agents, in order to bring them out of their apostacy, and so to reduce them to a right use of their agency; that is, to bring them to repentance and amendment of life; that thereby they might render themselves the suitable and proper objects of God's mercy and grace. Now, if this be the case, which, I think, whoever reads the gospel with care and attention will easily see that it is; it will follow that Mr. Beaven's fears were unfounded, and that my principles are free from objections he has laid upon them.



Under this head of argument, I shall consider what Mr. *Beaven* says of my principles, with respect to prayer, viz. "It seems directly and unavoidably to tend to render all prayer to God, for any blessing, help, or aid from him, for the performance of any branch of goodness that will render him acceptable to his Maker, impertinent, preposterous, and useless." *Page 30.* But I beg this author to consider, whether, if God kindly interposes in the hour mens *temptations*, and, by a supernatural influence, brings to their view such *useful truths*, as are proper for them to reflect upon, in order to keep them from *sinning*; or, if he presents to mens minds *such motives* as are proper to excite them to good actions, which he may do, consistent with my principles: I say, I desire to know of Mr. *Beaven*, whether these are not *great favours*, which are worthy of our most solemn *addresses* and *applications* to God for; and that, if we do pray for them, whether such prayers are *impertinent*, *preposterous*, and *useless*. I shall proceed no farther on this head of argument, because, I thing, what I have said is a sufficient answer to whatever there is of this kind which runs thro' Mr. *Beaven's* book. Again,

Secondly, Mr. *Beaven* urges, in favour of Mr. *Barclay*, that he was allowed to be a *very great man*, a man of the *first rank*. He was allowed to be so by the *author* of the letter in the *British Journal*, *Saturday, April 23, 1723, N<sup>o</sup> 30.* He was allowed to be so by Mr. *Norris*, who says that he had rather engage with an *hundred Bellarmin's, Harding's, and Stapleton's*, than with *one Barclay*. Now, admitting that Mr. *Barclay* was allowed by the persons beforementioned, and by thousands more, to be a very great man, a man of the first rank; yet it will not follow from thence, that his opinion of the point in debate is the truth; if the judgment

judgments of very great men were to be set up as the *standard of truth*, we should be in a *very sad case*; because very great men have *differed* in their judgments one from another. Besides, urging the *authority* of great names is making the appeal to such *judges* as, I am persuaded, Mr. Beaven, in other cases, will not be determined by. If I had urged the *opinion* of Mr. Norris, or the *author* of the letter in the *British Journal*, or such and such a *Pope* or *Council* against Mr. Barclay; I imagine, Mr. Beaven would have been so far from submitting his judgment to their authority, that, on the contrary, he would have turned them upon my hands with *contempt*. He might have told me that this was making the *appeal* to men, who are not constituted *infallible judges*; and so are not qualified to give an absolute and certain determination, in the present case. And, if this would have been a proper answer to me; then, surely, it must be so to Mr. Beaven. Again,

*Thirdly*, Mr. Beaven urges what Mr. Barclay himself has said, in other parts of his book. To which it is sufficient to answer, that, with respect to the point in debate, Mr. Barclay is *inconsistent* with himself. He sometimes *allows*, and sometimes *denies*, that the natural man has *voluntary agency*; but, supposing he had been uniform and consistent, yet his *authority* is of *no weight* in the present case. Again,

*Fourthly*, Mr. Beaven urges, in favour of Mr. Barclay, what Monro says, by way of query, *viz.*  
 "I would fain ask those who deny that any other  
 "light is necessary, in order to know God and  
 "divine things savingly, but that of reason as-  
 "sisted by outward revelation; what tolerable  
 "sense they will put on the devout and ardent  
 "breathings of the Psalmist, *Psalm cxix.* Open  
 "mine eyes; teach me thy statutes; give me under-  
 "standing,

"standing, and the like." He likewise quotes Mr. *Locke* speaking thus : " I am far from denying that God can or doth sometimes enlighten mens minds in the apprehending certain truths, or excite them to good actions by the immediate influence and assistance of the Holy Ghost." To which Mr. *Beaven* adds *Tully* and *Hierocles*, This, indeed, was proper to shew his reading ; but, as I have not argued against supernatural influences ; nor have denied such influences to be, in some respect and under some circumstances, necessary to man's salvation ; so I set by these authors, or rather what is quoted from them, as *foreign* to the present question. Besides, if those authors had advanced something, in Mr. *Barclay's* favour, the quoting them would not have been of weight ; because it is making the appeal to such judges, as, I presume, Mr. *Beaven* would not be determined by, as I observed above. And, I am persuaded, that if I had urged such arguments against Mr. *Barclay*, as Mr. *Beaven* does for him ; it would have minister'd to him an occasion of triumph. Again,

Fifthly, Mr. *Beaven* urges what I have said, as favouring Mr. *Barclay's* scheme, and as an evidence against myself ; and, accordingly, he quotes my words, which are as follow, page 45 of Mr. *Beaven's* book : " If it should be farther urged, that man does not receive any addition to his composition, neither does God act without the agency of man ; but God co-operates with man, and thereby enables him to perform that good, which, without such a co-operation, he could not do : I answer, that this may be the case, in some instances." Mr. *Beaven* having thus quoted my words, he proceeded to make his remarks upon them, which are as follow : " On which I observe, if this be the case, it  
" some

“ some instances, that God enables man to perform  
 “ that good which, without such a co-operation,  
 “ he could not do; then, his hypothesis of the abi-  
 “ lity of the natural man to perform every branch  
 “ of goodness, without supernatural help, is over-  
 “ turned by himself, and all his reasonings and  
 “ arguments, built on that hypothesis, vanish  
 “ like smoke. This shews the amusement of his  
 “ own scheme, and not of R. B. which he un-  
 “ justly charges it with, &c.”

Here we see this author *triumphs* over me, as if  
 he had gotten a *complete victory*. But, if he will be  
 pleased to read over again with care and attention  
 all that I have said upon the subject, in the tract  
 referred to; I imagine, he will then see that his  
 triumphs are *groundless*. For, when I desired the  
 depreciators of man's natural ability to give a  
 case, in which it will appear that the natural man,  
 as they express it, has not ability to perform any  
 one branch of goodness, which will render him  
 acceptable to his Maker; could Mr. *Beaven* be so  
*weak* as to think that, by a *branch of goodness*, I  
 intended such an instance as is *above* the reach of  
 human agency, considering every man's circum-  
 stance in life? and, as such, it is *not* his duty, nor  
 is the practice of it *necessary* to render him accep-  
 table to God. Could he think that I suppose a  
*poor man*, who has scarce bread and clothing for  
 himself, has *ability* to feed and clothe all the poor  
 of this kingdom, when he is destitute of the ma-  
 terials which constitute that ability? If he did  
 think so, I assure him he is *mistaken*. And tho'  
 the feeding and clothing all the poor of this king-  
 dom would be a *very good work*, yet it is not the  
 poor man's *duty* to perform it, nor is the perform-  
 ance of this good work *necessary* to render him ac-  
 ceptable to his Maker. Not but a poor man  
 has *so far* natural ability, in the present case, as  
 that,



that, if God should interpose, and in a *miraculous way* put so much food and apparel into *his possession*, he could then distribute it all, to answer the purposes aforesaid, without a *supernatural influence*. And tho' this miraculous interposition of Almighty God renders the poor man capable of performing *that good*, which, without such an interposition, he could not do ; yet, strictly speaking, this does not *add* to his natural ability, much less does it give him any *new agency*. For all the hand, which the poor man has in this good work, is performed by *that ability* which arises from his *natural composition*. So that my hypothesis stands *firm* and *unshaken*, notwithstanding the *attacks* of this author. As weak also is that which he further urges upon this head, that, because I allow supernatural operations *may*, in some instances, be *necessary* or *expedient* to reduce men to a right use of their agency, like as if a son should do amiss, it *would* or *might* be *necessary* or *expedient* for the father to tell him his faults, that he might amend them; therefore, he pretends that I overthrow my own scheme. But how, or upon what account do those operations become *necessary*, or *useful*, on my scheme ? Not, for want of voluntary agency in man ; not, because he has not natural ability to know and do his duty ; but because he *suffers* himself to be led away by *passion*, *appetite*, or the like ; and so lives in the *neglect*, or in the *abuse* of that natural ability that he has. It is upon these accounts that those operations do or may become necessary. And, I hope, this will satisfy my reader, that my scheme is not so *confused*, as Mr. Beaven imagined. But further,

Man in his natural capacity is a *moral* ~~being~~.  
 I have shewn above; and if at  
 his agency, and lives in  
 of his *manly chara*

renders him disagreeable and vile in the eyes of his Maker. And when that is the case, then, in the nature of the thing, nothing but his *repentance* and *reformation* can possibly render him agreeable and acceptable to God; supposing God is such a *wise* and *good* Being, as \* I have elsewhere proved him to be. Now, tho' a man be in such a *wicked* state, yet that does not *destroy* his agency. He is, in the course of his wickedness, as much a *moral agent*, as he was, when he *first* began to transgress the rule of his duty. Every *criminal* action, or omission, is the subject of his choice; he has power, and is at liberty to chuse, and do the contrary; and this renders his conduct *criminal*, which otherwise it could not be. And, as repentance and reformation are absolutely necessary to render such a man *acceptable* to his Maker; so such *reflections* and *considerations*, as are proper to work upon him as a moral agent, are necessary to that repentance. And tho' he is *capable* of *reflecting* upon, and *amending* his ways, as *above* said, and, therefore, *can do it*, if he pleases; yet he does not do it, but either *carelessly* goes on in his wickedness, without reflecting upon his conduct; or else *obstinately* persists in it, notwithstanding such reflection. This being the state of a wicked man, whoever would *reform him*, that is, would be an instrument in *persuading* him to reform himself; for reformation, strictly speaking, is the sinner's own act; it is *necessary*, or *expedient*, or *proper* that he should, some way or other, introduce, or make present to the sinner's mind, such *reflections* as, when attended to and followed, would be to him a proper ground and reason of his change. And it is in *this* view, that I allow supernaturally operations may be *necessary*, or *expedient*, to induce men to a right use of their a-

\* See the *Introduction* of God's Moral Character.

gency.

gency. So that such operations are or may be necessary, not to help wicked men to do what they could not do, without those operations ; but to *persuade* them, if they will be prevailed upon, that being the subject of their own choice, to what they could do, but would not, or did not, I shall proceed no further upon this head of argument, because, I think, this will suffice to shew, that I am not yet *convinced*, upon my own evidence. Again,

*Sixthly and lastly*, Mr. Beaven urges several texts of scripture, in favour of Mr. Barclay, with regard to the point in hand. So that the question here is, whether the *Bible* teaches any such doctrine, *viz.* that *man in his natural state, as he is the offspring of Adam, is destitute of agency ; and that he is put in a capacity of voluntary agency, by a supernatural influence.* To which it is sufficient to answer, that this doctrine is plainly repugnant to the nature and the truth of things, as I have largely shewn ; and, therefore, is *absolutely false*. Besides, the scripture considers man in his natural capacity, as having *apostatized*, as having *sinned*, without once supposing that a supernatural influence was necessary, to render him *capable* of sinning or apostatizing. And God is represented as mercifully *interposing*, not to render men *capable* of being Apostates, by putting them in a capacity of voluntary agency ; but to *bring them out of their Apostacy*, by using all proper methods of persuasion, whether by internal or external operations, to bring them to repentance and amendment of life. Now, if the case be thus represented in the *scripture*, as is most notoriously evident it is ; then, this is as plain a proof, as the scripture can possibly give, that man, *in his natural capacity, is a moral agent ; has power to do good and evil, and is at liberty for the choice of either of these, because, if this was not his case,*

he

he could not *sin*, could not *apostatize*; he could not be *lost*, as aforesaid, But, farther in the scripture, there are some *figurative* and *borrowed* expressions; as in *Isaiab* lix. 1. *Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear, &c.* And there are some *lofty* and *strong* expressions, according to the usage of the *Eastern* countries, in which there is much more expressed, when taken strictly, than was intended should be understood; as in *John* xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* In the first of these texts God is spoken of, as having *hands* and *ears*; and in the latter the *Disciples* of Christ are spoken, as *unable of action*. Now supposing a man should found upon the abovemention'd words of *Isaiab* this doctrine, *viz.* that *God has a material body constituted of hands and ears, and formed, in the general, as all our bodies are;* and, supposing he should found upon the abovemention'd words of *Christ* this doctrine, *viz.* that *man, in his natural capacity, is destitute of voluntary agency,* in such a case it would be sufficient to answer, that those doctrines are and must be *erroneous*, because *reason* and *fact* shew the contrary. And, therefore, to insist that the forementioned texts are to be understood in such a sense, as expresses those doctrines, is at once to offer an *assault* to the *scriptures*, and to the *understandings* of men. For, as the *scriptures* and *reason* assure us that God is a Being purely spiritual, abstracted from body; so, in like manner, the *scriptures* and *experience* assure us that man, *as man*, has in him the faculties of intelligence and activity, which constitutes him a moral agent. In the present case, there is no occasion of a strict enquiry into the sense and meaning of the texts above, or of any other texts of scripture, upon which the aforesaid doctrine may be *liable* to be founded. For.



as those doctrines contain *propositions* which are manifestly *false in fact*; so from hence it will follow, as the *Bible* is the *rule of truth* and the *word of God*, it cannot possibly contain in it any such doctrines. And, therefore, if Mr. Barclay's adherents shall still maintain that the latter of those doctrines is contained in scripture; this, I think, is to maintain that the scriptures are as *confused* and *contradictory*, as their scheme. To this I may add, that, what our Saviour said of his *Disciples*, in the text above, the same he has said of *himself*, as in *John* v. 30. *I can of mine ownself do nothing*. And from hence I argue; if it will follow from those words of Christ, *viz. without me yea can do nothing*; that man, when consider'd in his natural capacity, abstracted from all supernatural influences, is *destitute of voluntary agency*; then, it will equally follow from those other words of Christ, *viz. I can of mine ownself do nothing*, that Christ, when consider'd in his natural capacity, abstracted from the act and influence of every other agent, is *destitute of voluntary agency* also. But, surely, the latter of these will not be admitted, and therefore, not the former. And,

From hence, I presume, my reader will see how *unkind*, or rather *unjust*, Mr. Beaven's charge upon me is, *viz. that I must think the holy scriptures romantick and wild*; that the Evangelists were *some of the most designing or deluded creatures that ever lived*; and that *Jesus Christ himself is not free from such imputations*, page 2 of Mr. Beaven's Introduction. With respect to which, I beg him to consider what manner of spirit he is of; and whether this be the produce of that *meak, gentle, charitable spirit* which becomes the *gospel of Christ*; or whether it be not rather the produce of that *resentment* which he has taken up against me, tho', I think, without any *just ground*. However,

ever, I assure him, that I am so much a *christian*, as not to allow myself in such a practice.

Thus, I have gone thro' the *principal* things, which are urged in Mr. *Barclay's* defence. There are other things of less note in Mr. *Beaven's* book, which I have not yet taken notice of; such as his complaining that I quoted from the *fourth* edition of *Robert Barclay's* Apology, in *English*. But this, I think, answers no other purpose than to acquaint the world, that he is a man of *letters*, who has read Mr. *Barclay's* Apology, in *Latin*. And tho' this is Mr. *Beaven's* case; yet, I presume, he does not need to be told that it is not mine. I am acquainted with no other language than our own mother-tongue; neither do I pretend to be a *master* of that, so as to understand all the *grammar* rules, by which men of *letters* govern themselves in their writings; it being sufficient to my purpose, that I can convey my mind *plainly* and *easily* to my reader; and, if herein I should not be *correct*, I am persuaded, every *ingenious* mind will excuse it. Neither have I yet taken notice of the mighty value put upon Mr. *Barclay's* scheme, on the account of its being a *mean* betwixt *Calvinism* and *Pelagianism*. For, supposing it to be a mean betwixt twenty *extremes*; yet it makes nothing hereby against me; it being sufficient to my purpose to shew, which I have done, that it is *inconsistent* with truth, and with itself. Nor have I hitherto taken notice of that *contempt*, with which Mr. *Beaven* treats what he is pleased to call my *darling* notion, *viz.* the *nature and truth of things*; a *two-edged sword*, with which I am quickly to dispatch the *doctrine of the Bible*; reduce religion to the *moral fitness of things*; and discard and banish the *holy writings out of the world*, as a collection of *romantick and wild stories of actions done by men, impossible in the nature and reason of things*, &c. These are some of

the *flights* which Mr. Beaven has been pleased to take. But I would beg him to explain himself, and shew what he would be at. Would he *disarm* mankind of every *guard*, and lay them open to every *imposition*? that so when any one of the species shall take it into his head, that he is under a *divine impulse* or *supernatural influence*; and, consequently, that whatever he shall deliver, as the produce of it, is a *divine oracle*; then, mankind have no *rule* or *means* by which they can judge, whether it be so, or not, but must *blindly submit* to whatever is thus *dictated* to them. I say, if this be his design in treating with *contempt*, and thereby endeavouring to *discard* what he is pleased to call my *darling notion* (which if it be not, I cannot conceive what he is driving at) then let him *openly avow* it. Tho', I imagine, mankind are not so *bewitched* as to give up their understandings, as aforesaid; and, I think, Mr. Beaven pays but a *mean complement* to the *scriptures*, by considering them as a collection of *doctrines* and *facts*, that will not bear an *open* and *fair examination*. So that the *nature and reason of things*, the *nature and truth of things*, and the *moral fitness of things*, must be set aside as *ridiculous principles* to make way for our *receiving* them. There are likewise many other things in Mr. Beaven's book, which I have not replied to; but, then, these are personal, and, therefore, I dispise them; and they are *foreign* to the question or point in debate, and are an address to the *passions*, and not to the *understandings* of men; and, therefore, I set them by as so many *blanks*.

Upon the whole, I think I have fully shewn that the *scheme*, laid down in Mr. Barclay's book, is *confused*, *absurd*, and *contradictory*; and that Mr. Beaven has not been able to free it from this charge; however, if he, or his more able friend, shall

shall be pleased to make a *rejoinder*, the way is clear before them. It is but to come *openly* and *fairly* into the question, free from all *disguises* and *wanderings* from the subject; and, then, I am persuaded, the controversy will soon come to an end. To conclude: I observe, that the *great end* and *purpose* of Christ's coming into the world was to *save sinners*; and not to put men in a *capacity* of sinning. He came not to make us *men*, by putting us in a capacity of voluntary agency; but to make us *good men*, by using all those methods which are consistent with, and proper to work on *moral agents*, whether by internal or external operations; thereby to engage us to *repent* and *amend our ways*; to live *godly*, *soberly*, and *righteously* in this world, and so to *fit* and *prepare* us for the happiness of another. And, I persuade myself, that, in *this view*, christianity is *capable* of being *defended*.

Once more, and I have done; either man, in his natural capacity, is a *moral agent*, or he is not; if he is, then, man, in his natural state, has *power*, and is at *liberty* to do, or avoid doing either good, or evil; and, consequently, has power, and is at liberty to render himself *acceptable* or *displeasing* to his Maker, without a supernatural influence: I say, this must be unavoidably his case, supposing him to be a *moral agent*. For, if man, in his natural state, has not a power and liberty of doing or avoiding either good, or evil, and, consequently, of rendering himself acceptable or displeasing to his Maker; then, he is not an agent, but a mere *patient*. And, to say in this case, that there is in man a *proneness* and *inclination* to sin, is to say nothing to the purpose; because, in a *free creature*, it is supposed that there is a power and liberty either to *indulge* or *controul* that proneness and inclination. So that a power and liberty of



doing good, or evil, of pleasing or displeasing God, still remains ; for if this propensities and inclination to sin either *destroys* or is *inconsistent* with a power and liberty of doing good, or evil, of pleasing or displeasing God, as aforesaid ; then, it is the same as *necessity*, and, consequently, it destroys or is inconsistent with our *agency*. But if man, in his natural capacity, is *not* a moral agent, then, I acknowledge his case to be otherwise than I have represented it to be ; and, when that is shewn, I will give up the point. However, this, I think, is a matter of the *utmost importance*, and in which mankind are nearly concerned ; because all *morality* and *religion* have an apparent dependance upon it. For if man is such a creature, as I have above proved him to be ; that is, if he has in him a power and liberty of doing either good, or evil, and either of these is the subject of his *own free choice*, so that he might, if he had pleased, have chose and done the contrary ; then, his actions, in every instance, will be more or less religious, or irreligious, virtuous, or vicious, as the *motives* to those actions, which are the *ground* and *reason* of them, are more or less so ; and then those actions will be justly *approved*, or *condemned*, not only in the judgment of God, but of every man's own conscience accordingly. But if man in his natural capacity, as *man*, has not a power and liberty, as aforesaid, then, with *respect to him*, those actions, which are performed by his instrumentality, have no religion nor irreligion, virtue nor vice in them ; neither can he, in *justice* and *equity*, be approved, or condemned, in his own conscience, nor in the judgment of any other being, upon the account of them. And as a power and liberty of doing either good, or evil is *absolutely necessary* to render our actions religious, or irreligious, virtuous, or vicious ; so every *principle*

ple which *destroys* or is *inconsistent* with human liberty. I think, ought carefully to be guarded against, as being highly *injurious* to mankind. For when man consider themselves under a *fatality*, and that their actions are not the subject of their own free choice; whether that fatality be brought upon them by the *fall* of *Adam*, or any other way; or whether it appears under the *disguise* of another name; then, not only the exciting or restraining influence, which otherwise might arise from a sense of the good, or evil, of the action in view, is taken away; but also every motive to virtue and religion is *weakened*, if not *destroyed* by it; because, in this case, the actions, which are performed in, and by man, are not, strictly and properly, the effect and produce of his *own will* and *agency*, but of the will and agency of another. And as the *fundamental principle* in Mr. Barclay's scheme is, that man cannot do good, without a supernatural influence; and as this principle is *inconsistent* with human liberty, as I have shewn above; so the *ground* or *reason* of my examining Mr. Barclay, on this head, was not to engage myself in a *wrangling controversy*, but to prevent the *misleading* of mankind in a point of such importance. And as, in the foregoing discourse, I have fully proved the *agency* of the natural man, and, I think, thereby have said all that is necessary, or that the subject requires; so I shall take my leave of it and you, who am,

S I R,

Your obliged humble Servant, &c.

# TRACT XXV.

## SOME SHORT

Remarks upon Dr. *Morgan's* Tract,

ENTITLED,

A Letter to Mr. *Chubb*; occasioned by his two Letters to a Friend, &c. In a third Letter to a Friend. Humbly offered to the Consideration of the People called *Quakers*.

S I R,

I HAVE received a letter subscribed by Dr. *Morgan*, which, he says, is occasioned by my two former letters to you. The subject of the *Doctor's* letter is chiefly made up of complaints. *First*, that I offer'd the foremention'd letter to the consideration of the *Quakers only*; whereas, if I had not been *partial*, if I had not made myself a *party-man*, and the like, I should have offered them to the *Calvinistical Church of England*, and to a multitude of others; tho', by the way, this, I think, is using the Church of *England* *unkindly*; for, however the case were heretofore; yet, I am persuaded, Dr. *Morgan* is sensible that the generality of the Church of *England* at present, both Clergy and Laity, have given up *Calvinism*, as *erroneous*. *Secondly*, that I have very much misrepresented Mr. *Barclay*. And, under both these heads of complaint, I am represented, as acting a part very *unfair* and *disingenuous*.

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As to the *first* complaint, I answer, that I cannot charge myself with having any *vicious* view in this matter. For as Mr. Barclay's book is styl'd, *An Apology for the true Christian Divinity, as the same is held forth and preached by the People called Quakers*; and as, I apprehend, Mr. Barclay's Apology is held in great *reverence* by the people of that profession, who, therefore, probably are much *influence'd* by it; so I thought it was suitable and proper to recommend what I had to offer upon the subject, to their consideration, not in the least intending thereby to make myself a *party-man*, or to insinuate any thing which might be *dishonourable* to the *Quakers*. This is the *truth* of the case; but, whether it will be to the *Doctor's* satisfaction, I know not. And, whether I have given any *just* occasion for what he has urged against me upon this head, I will leave to the *more candid world* to judge. Again,

*Secondly*, It is urged that I have very much *misrepresented* Mr. Barclay. In answer to which I observe, that, in the 27th page of Dr. Morgan's letter, he expresses himself in the following words.

"It might, for ought I know, be Mr. Barclay's opinion, that the state of mankind, considered merely as fallen in *Adam*, without the *death* of *Christ*, or the recovering grace of *God* thro' him, would have been the same as represented in your propositions; that is, men would have been *absolutely* subjected to the power of the *devil*, and their own *lusts*, under an *incurable* ignorance, blindness, and selfishness; in which case, man would not have been a *moral agent*, or *accountable* for his actions. And, in consequence of this, man would have *perished* with the *beasts*, or have remained for ever under the power of *death*, without any *resurrection* to life and immortality. And I am the more apt



“ to think that this might be *Barclay's* opinion, “ because I take it to be the *true scripture* account “ of the matter.” Here I observe, that Dr. *Morgan* acknowledges that Mr. *Barclay's* opinion of the condition of man in the fall, considered abstractedly from, and without the grace of Christ, may be, and he thinks that it is, what I have represented it to be, in the two propositions I have expressed it by. Now, if this be admitted to be the case, then, it is highly reasonable to suppose that Mr. *Barclay* expressed *this opinion* in that proposition, wherein he professedly undertook to treat of this subject; and if so, then, surely, I cannot have *misrepresented* him in my two propositions, because I only represented him, as speaking his own opinion set forth and declared in his own proposition. And here I crave leave to observe, that tho’ the *Doctor's* complaint against me, of *misrepresenting* Mr. *Barclay*, makes up a great part of his letter, and is every way represented to my disadvantage; yet this complaint, by his *own* acknowledgment, is *perfectly groundless*.

Mr. *Barclay* speaks of man under a two-fold consideration, *first*, as he is in, what we call, his natural condition, *viz.* man as man, or as the natural seed of Adam, or as he is in the fall, with respect to his capacities and abilities, considered abstractedly from the grace of Christ, or any supernatural influence upon him.

*Secondly*, He considers man, with respect to his capacities and abilities, when under a supernatural influence, and the enlivening aid of *Jesus Christ*. But, then, he does not consider man, in this last view, as his state in the fall, but, on the contrary, as having something supernatural afforded him to restore and recover him from that fall. So that the condition of man in the fall, in Mr. *Barclay's* sense, is the natural state and condition of every  
man

man, as he is a *man*, or the offspring of *Adam*, with respect to his capacities and abilities, at all times, and in all places, considered abstractedly from the *grace of Christ*, or any *supernatural influence* upon him. Dr. *Morgan* indeed, in treating of this subject, expresses himself differently from Mr. *Barclay*, and speaks of man, not *what he is*, but *what he would have been* in the fall, without the *grace of Christ*. Whereas Mr. *Barclay* expresses himself thus: "All *Adam's* posterity, or mankind, both *Jew* and *Gentile*, as to the first *Adam* or earthly man, are fallen, degenerate, and dead," not *would have been fallen, degenerate, and dead*. Again, "man, therefore, as *he is in this state*, can know nothing aright;" not as *he would have been in another state*, he would not have known any thing aright. Here we see, that *the condition of man in the fall*, according to Mr. *Barclay*, is not any *chimerical Hottentot Taboo state*, which man *would have been in*, without the *grace of Christ*; but it is the state and condition of mankind, which *they are in*, as they are *barely men*, or the offspring of *Adam*, considered as such, without any *supernatural influence* upon them. Whether by this *different way of speaking*, which, I find, runs thro' the *Doctor's* letter, he intended to convey to his reader the *same idea* of the condition of man in the fall, as plainly appears to arise from Mr. *Barclay's words*, and which, I think, he ought to intend, if he would be *ingenuous* in the defence of that author; or whether he intended *another view* of the condition of man in the fall, than what Mr. *Barclay* professedly treats of, I know not, neither am I solicitous about it, because the case is not changed by any wrong representation which may be given of it. Man being represented in a two-fold view by Mr. *Barclay*, as I observed above; I undertook

to examine his principles, *only* with respect to *one* of those views, viz. *man as he is in the fall*. And to this I applied myself, both in my Examination of Mr. *Barclay's* Principles, and in my Reply to Mr. *Beaven*; wherein I have taken a view of the natural condition of man, consider'd abstractedly from, and without the grace of Christ; and, I think, have fully shewn, that *human nature* is very much *misrepresented* by Mr. *Barclay*, without blending together and confounding his two-fold view of man, as the Doctor represents me to have done. And as I undertook to examine Mr. *Barclay's* opinion in this *one point*, viz. the condition of man, as *man*, or as *he is the natural seed of Adam*, or as *he is in the fall*, considered abstractedly from, and without the grace of Christ; so I reduced his sense of this point to two plain propositions; which propositions Dr. *Morgan* allows may be a *just* and *true* representation of Mr. *Barclay's* sense herein; and that man in this view, according to Mr. *Barclay*, is not a *moral agent*, is not *accountable*, &c. and if so, then, I have not misrepresented him; and, consequently, Dr. *Morgan's* complaint is *groundless*, by his own acknowledgment.

But, then, the Doctor observes, that it will not follow from hence that man is a *mere patient*; for tho', in his natural condition, he is not a *moral agent*; yet he is *'an agent*, such as the *brute beasts* are. To which I answer, that according to the Doctor's representation of the condition of man in the fall, which he thinks may be the opinion of Mr. *Barclay*, men, without the grace of Christ, would be *absolutely subjected* to the *power* of the *devil* and their own *lusts*; and if so, then, what sort of agency would remain in them, I cannot conceive; not, surely, such agency as takes place  
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in brutes, because they are not *absolutely subjected*, as aforesaid, their actions being the effect of *choice* or *election*; for otherwise they could not be agents. A mere machine is *absolutely subjected* to the power of the agent, which acts upon it; and one agent may be *absolutely subjected* to the power of another, when he has not sufficient strength to *repel* force with force; but, then, in such a case, he does not *act*, but is *acted* upon. Whereas, in all cases, where *action* takes place, or where there is sufficient strength to *repel* force with force; there both *activeness* and *passiveness*, or *action* and *passion*, is the produce of *choice* or *election*; and, consequently, there is not *absolute subjection*. So that if man, as he is in the fall, according to Mr. Barclay and Dr. Morgan, is *absolutely subjected* to the power of the devil and his own *lusts*; then, in that state, he is not an *agent*, but a *patient*. And this must be his case, both *without* and *with* the grace of Christ; except the work of grace consists in turning a *patient* into an *agent*, which, I presume, Dr. Morgan will not affirm.

But admitting that such agency, as in *brute beasts*, would take place in the natural man, upon Mr. Barclay's principles; yet the Doctor does not pretend that this is the *truth* of the case; he only observes, that it appears to him to be the *true scripture* account of the case, and that he *thinks* it is not contrary to the *reason* of things or the *constitution* of *human nature*. As to its being the *scripture* account of the case, *viz.* that man, in his natural capacity, is not a *moral agent*; that his soul is *naturally mortal*, and dies or perishes with the body, &c. This, I think, is using the scripture *unkindly*, because, I imagine, it is out of his power to shew that there are any *such doctrines* contained therein. Surely, nothing is more *plain* and *evident* in the scriptures, than that the *work*  
of



of *grace* consists in changing men from *bad* to *good*, and not in turning *brutes*, strictly and properly so called, into *men*. And as to its being the *Doctor's opinion*, that it is not *contrary* to the constitution of human nature, that men should be *brutes*, and not *moral agents*; in this I can scarce believe him. That men may *neglect*, as well as *abuse* their faculties, and so live in a way which is *unworthy* of and *below* their *reason*, is easy to be conceived, and is, I think, the case of the *Hottentots*. But that a man so well acquainted with the human constitution, as Dr. *Morgan* may reasonably be supposed to be, *can think* that brutality, and not moral agency, may be the *natural result* of the constitution of man, when that constitution has not suffer'd any injury by any accident which may attend it; this is what I am doubtful of. I cannot but that think the Doctor has observed, in the course of his practice, as a *physician*, many instances of persons who have become *delirious* or *lunatick*, when they have been under a *violent fever*, or some other *disorder* upon their *constitutions*; and so, for a time, have ceased to be *moral agents*; and that, by the application of proper *medicines*, the disorder upon the constitution has been *removed*, the deliriousness or lunacy has *ceased*; and the person has *returned again* to a state of moral agency. Now, the question arising from hence will be, whether deliriousness or lunacy, or whether moral agency in such a person, be the *natural result* of the *human constitution*? and which of these states may, strictly and properly, be said to be the *natural state* of that person? Or the question may be, when a man becomes delirious or lunatick, whether this arises from his *ceasing* to be under the *grace* of *Christ*, and thereby *ceasing* to be a moral agent; or whether it be the *effect* of a disorder in his constitution? And, when  
his

his diliriousness or lunacy *goes off*, whether this be the *effect* of the *return* of the *grace* of *Christ* upon him, and by its return he becomes a moral agent again; or whether it be not the *effect* of the *removal* of a *disorder* from the constitution, and so the creature is *restored* again to what is properly its natural state, viz. *moral agency*? The like may be said of *idiots*. For, I think, upon Dr. Morgan's scheme, idiotism is not the result of some *defect* in the *particular constitution* of the idiot, but it is occasioned by the *grace* of *Christ*, or a *supernatural* influence, being *with-held* from him. These are cases which, I think, are proper to be considered, in order to our discerning and judging, whether *brutality*, or *moral agency*, may be the natural result of the human constitution. But to return,

If it should be said, Tho' man, in his *natural* condition, according to Mr. Barclay, is *absolutely* subjected to the *power* of the *devil* and his own *lusts*, and so is upon a *level* with the brute beasts, or in a state *below* them; yet that no *contradiction* arises from hence. I answer; Mr. Barclay expresses himself *differently*, with respect to the *natural condition of man in the fall*, in other parts of his book; as in page 144. as quoted by Mr. Beaven: "In deed, that man, as he is a rational creature, hath reason, as a natural faculty of his soul, by which he can discern things that are rational, we deny not." Here we see that the *natural man* is consider'd as a *rational creature*, one who has *reason* as a *natural faculty* of his soul, by which he can discern things that are *rational*; and, if so, then, surely, he is a *moral agent*; and this I call *confusion* and *contradiction*. Besides, the Doctor says, page 23. "'Tis plain, that Mr. Barclay here supposes that the *good* and *evil seed*, as he calls it, that is, the *motives* and *inducements* that incline

"incline and dispose men to *selfishness* on the one  
 "hand, or to *benevolence* on the other, do not act  
 "necessarily, or produce their effects by any ir-  
 "rational agency upon the mind ; but leave men  
 "entirely to their *liberty*, and *natural power* of  
 "choosing and refusing, whether they will resist or  
 "not resist, comply with or reject either the  
 "one or the other." And, if so, then, I think,  
 it will not only follow that man is a *free creature*,  
 and a *moral agent*, but also that he is such, *ante-*  
*cedent* to, and *independent* of all *supernatural* in-  
 fluences, whether *good*, or *evil* ; and then, I think,  
 man's ability *in* the fall, and *out* of the fall, comes  
 to the same thing ; which brings more confusion  
 still. For, according to Mr. Barclay, man in the  
 fall is a *free creature*, and he is *not* a free creature ;  
 he is a *moral agent*, and he is *not* a moral agent ; he  
 is *absolutely subjected* to the *power* of the *devil* and  
 his own *lusts*, and he is *not* absolutely subjected to  
 the power of the devil and his own lusts. I say,  
 this will unavoidably be the case, upon Mr. Bar-  
 clay's scheme. And it appears to be so, without  
 confounding the two views he takes of man,  
 which the Doctor represents me to have done.  
 And this is such *confusion* and *contradiction*, as, I  
 imagine, Dr. Morgan will not be able to get  
 clear of.

But to conclude ; the Doctor tells me that my  
 notion of *Christ's redemption*, and the *necessity* of *di-*  
*vine grace* is, he thinks, a little extraordinary for  
 a christian. Let it be so. He likewise tells me,  
 'tis by way of scorn and reproach, and with an air  
 of ridicule, that Christ tells the proud self-justifying  
*Pharisees*, that he had no business or concern with  
 them, as such. But if he will please to consider  
 the text, I think, he may see that Christ, in that  
 place, is not, *reproaching* the *Pharisees*, but *jus-*  
*tifying himself* and his own *conduct*, in keeping com-  
 pany

pany with *Publicans* and *Sinners*; and this he does by telling them, that, in this, he was pursuing the great end and purpose of his *ministry*, and like a good *physician*, who ministers not to the *healibful*, but to the *sick*. So his business was to apply himself, not to the *good* and *virtuous*, but to *vicious men*, to bring them to repentance and amendment of life. But supposing I am mistaken herein, yet, surely, Dr. *Morgan's* notion or representation of *Christ's redemption* is somewhat *extraordinary*, as well as mine. With him, it is extended to *all* mankind, without *exception*; and yet the poor *Hottentots* are excepted, they are *left* in their fallen state, without any redemption; they are to die like *brute beasts* as they are, and to *remain* under the power of death, without any *resurrection* to life and immortality. And so the christian redemption is a *geneneral redemption*, as it is extended *universally to all*; and it is a *particular redemption*, as the poor *Hottentots* are excluded from it. But, I shall leave the Doctor, with his *confused* and *contradictory Hottentot* scheme; presuming he is as *singular* herein, as, he imagines, I am in mine.

Thus, Sir, I have given you a short view of Dr. *Morgan's* letter, and have shewn you how *groundless* his *complaints* against me are; and if he should go on as he begun, I think, I shall give you no farther trouble on his account.

I am, SIR,

Your obliged humble

Servant, &c.

TRACT



# T R A C T XXVI.

## *Scripture Evidence consider'd:*

### I N

A View of the Controversy, betwixt the Author and Mr. *Barclay's* Defenders, viz. Mr. *Beaven* and Dr. *Morgan*. Wherein is shewn, What *Qualifications* are absolutely necessary to take Place in the *Bible*, in order to render it capable of being the *Rule of Truth*; and that, as it is such a Rule, the following Proposition, viz. *that Man cannot do what is morally Good, without a Supernatural Influence*, is not, nor cannot be contained therein. In a fourth Letter to a Friend. Humbly offered to the Consideration of the People called *Quakers*.

### S I R,

I N my first letter, I gave you my opinion of Mr. *Barclay's* principles, with respect to man's natural ability since the fall; and shewed you that this scheme is *confusion*, and a *contradiction* to itself. This has alarmed the *Quakers*, or some of them at least; and tho' they cannot defend those principles, yet they seem unwilling they should be given up. And this has given occasion to Mr. *Beaven* to appear in Mr. *Barclay's* defence, in a tract entitled, *Supernatural Influences necessary to Salvation*, &c. what he has principally offer'd in favour of Mr. *Barclay*, is, that I have misrepresented him in the two propositions, by which I have expressed his sense of the condition of man in the fall; and likewise that my principles are very

very injurious; that Mr. Barclay was allow'd to be a very great man; that he has declar'd otherwise than what my two propositions set forth, in other parts of his book; that I have contradicted myself; that Monro and Locke, Tully and Hierocles, were of Mr. Barclay's opinion; and that the scriptures are on his side of the question. The groundlessness of some of these, and the weakness of the rest, I have fully shewn in my second letter.

Which letter, together with the former, hath drawn forth another advocate for Mr. Barclay, namely, Dr. Morgan, in a tract, entitled, *A Letter to me*; which letter is principally made up of complaints, viz. that I recommended my two letters to the consideration of the Quakers only; whereas if I had not been partial, if I had not made my self a party-man, &c. I should have offer'd them to a multitude of others; and likewise that I have very much misrepresented Mr. Barclay. The groundlessness of these complaints I have shewn you, in my third letter.

Dr. Morgan has also appear'd a second time, in a tract entitled, *A farther Defence of Mr. Barclay*; in which tract he gives a particular account of the condition of man in the fall, when consider'd abstractedly from supervening grace. And this new scheme he considers as Mr. Barclay's, and as the scripture account of the matter, viz. that man in the fall, without supervening grace, has natural liberty, but is destitute of moral agency. This distinction he complains I have not made, and it is with him a distinction of such importance, that it helps him out upon all occasions; with respect to which, I allow the Doctor, if that will please him, that there may be natural liberty in a creature, where there is not moral agency; but where moral agency takes place, which is the case of man, there natural liberty and moral agency are the same thing;

and, therefore, I made no such distinction, because, in the case before us, there is no place for it,

By natural liberty I understand the Doctor means, that man in the fall, without supervening grace, has power, and is at liberty, *to act, or not act*, from such motives as are present to his mind; that he has power, and is at liberty, either to *follow*, or to *control* his appetites and passions, and the like. This is the idea which the words, *natural liberty*, convey to me. But how such liberty will consist with man's being *absolutely subjected* to the power of his own lusts is what I cannot conceive. Absolute subjection, in the present case, seems to suppose, that when *passion* or *appetite* interpose, man is *necessarily* and *unavoidably* carry'd on to action, independent of his own will or choice; but, then, this appears to me inconsistent with natural liberty, and his confusion and contradiction; tho' possibly the Doctor, by the help of some lucky distinction may get clear off it. Again, if man has natural liberty, then, how he is *absolutely subjected* to the power of the Devil is hard to conceive. Absolute subjection, in this case, seems to suppose that when the *devil* exercises his power in or upon a man, action from that man will *unavoidably follow* according to the *devil's* intention; and that, in such a case, it is not in a man's power to refrain from acting, or to act otherwise; but, then, this is inconsistent with natural liberty. And if we consider the devil's power to consist only in *tempting man* to the performance of this or that action, which it has hitherto been judged to be; and if man has natural liberty, as aforesaid, then, it is a matter of choice or election to every man, either to *comply with*, or to *reject* the devil's temptation. But, then, in this case, man is not absolutely subjected to the devil's power

er; so that the whole is manifest confusion and contradiction. Besides, it has hitherto been judged, that the work and business of the devil with man has been to tempt and betray him into *sin*; whereas man in the fall having only natural liberty, and being destitute of moral agency, he is *incapable* of *sinning*, and, consequently, of being *tempted* to *sin*. And when we consider the case, in this view, it will be hard to find what is the ground of the devil's temptations, and what it is which makes him to interest himself in the affairs of mankind; tho', perhaps, this may be all clear'd up in the Doctor's next performance.

If it should be urged, that I have used the terms, *absolute subjection*, in a sense too strong for what Dr. Morgan intended. I answer, if absolute subjection does not *force to action*, but men are at liberty to act, or not to act, notwithstanding such subjection; then, I think, the case will stand thus, viz. that there are *appetites* and *passions* in men; and that they have power, and are at liberty either to *indulge* or *controul* them; that the *devil tempts* men; and that they have power, and are at liberty either to *comply with* or *reject* his temptations. So that men's being absolutely subjected to the power of the devil and their own lusts amounts just to nothing at all. In the Doctor's first tract, men's being absolutely subjected to the power of the devil and their own lusts seems to be considered and ranged among the terrible effects of the fall. But, in this view of the case, it is no effect of the fall at all; it is the condition of man, whether *standing*, or *fallen*, whether with, or without, *supervening grace*, except *supervening grace irresistibly* determines men to action; which, I presume, the Doctor will not affirm, because, I think, he has elsewhere declar'd the contrary. Appetites and passions, and being tempted, and likewise a power



and liberty to indulge or controul those appetites and passions, and to comply with or reject temptations, took place in our first parents, *antecedent* to their transgression; and this was their case, after they had transgressed. And the case must be always the same with man, whilst he is *constituted* and *circumstanced* as he is, and whilst *agency* or *liberty* take place in him; and, therefore, I cannot conceive to what end the Doctor introduced those terms, *viz.* men's being absolutely subjected to the power of the devil and their own lusts, except it were to *amuse* and *mislead* his reader. Thus, I have consider'd the case of man in the fall upon Dr. Morgan's scheme, with respect to what man *has*, *viz.* *natural liberty*. I now come to consider his case, with respect to what *he has not*, *viz.* *moral agency*.

By the *want* of moral agency in man, I understand the Doctor means, that man in the fall without supervening grace, is *incapable* of discerning, betwixt good and evil, in a *moral sense*; that is, man is incapable of discerning, that to succour and relieve the distressed, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and the like, are actions which are *kind* and *good*, and therefore, *proper* for him to perform. He is incapable of discerning, that to do as he would be done by, to make a grateful acknowledgment of a benefit received, to honour and reverence a benefactor and the like, are actions which are *right* and *fit*, and, therefore, *worthy* of his performance. He is incapable of discerning, that to slander and revile his neighbour, to invade his property, or to commit adultery, murder, and the like, are actions which are *wrong* and *evil*, and, therefore, ought to be avoided. And, as this is the *condition* of man in the fall, according to Dr. Morgan; so, according to him, man is translated out of this into another state, *viz.* that  
of

of moral agency, by *supervening grace*; which grace is extended *universally to all*, tho', according to his *first* tract, the poor *Hottentots* are excepted; and, according to his *last* performance, it is very *partially* administer'd; because some persons, for want of *sepervening* grace, remain in *invincible ignorance*, with respect to some points, and upon others the effects of the fall remain in *part*. For tho' they can reason justly, in *some* cases, yet they are *mad*, with respect to other; tho' they can *govern* and *restrain* their appetites and passions, in some instances, yet those appetites and passions are *invincible*, in others, according as *supervening* grace is afforded or withheld from them. And hereby I think the Doctor, whether he intends it, or not, is giving a most fatal wound to *religion* and *virtue*, and doing such *injury* to mankind, as he may never be able to repair, by his pointing out to men a way to *excuse* and *justify* themselves in the practice of every *vileness*. For will not every man, who follows his vicious inclinations, be glad to have this to plead *to*, and *for himself*, viz. that in those instances, in which his actions appear to be criminal, *supervening* grace was *witheld* from him; that his appetite or his passion interposed and *forced* him to action; and that it was not in his power to restrain it, and consequently, that he is wholly *unaccountable*, in those instances? so that a man may go into the *vilest* actions, and yet have wherewith to render his mind perfectly *easy* and *quiet*, and be free from all *reluctancy* in, and after the performance of them. And if this were the case, which, surely, it is not, I cannot see how our *governours* can be justified in *punishing* those persons, who transgress the law; because, in every such instance, for any thing they know, *supervening* grace may have been *witheld*, *invincible appetite* or *passion* may have taken place, and

it may not have been in the person's power to have done otherwise. And as the Doctor will have it, that he is pleading the cause of *christianity*; so, I think, it will be proper for him to consider *what cause* he has been pleading here. And here I beg leave to observe, that by *invincible* appetites and passions, I understand the Doctor to mean *irrestrainable* appetites and passions; other wise I think those terms serve only to *amuse*. And if irrestrainable be intended, then, natural liberty is *lost and gone*; tho', I think, *natural liberty, absolute subjection*, and *invincible* appetites and passions, serve the purpose of so many *puppets* to the Doctor, which he makes to appear, or disappear, as either side of his contradictory scheme requires.

Thus I have taken a view of the *condition* of man in the fall, as the case is represented by Dr. Morgan; and tho' I readily yield to the Doctor, that this is, *in part* Mr. Barclay's scheme, because part of what the Doctor has advanced will unavoidably follow from the principles Mr. Barclay has laid down; yet this is by no means a *vindication* of that *author*, because the very *reverse* to *some of this* is likewise a part of his scheme. Mr. Barclay allows that man in the fall, without supervening grace, is a *rational creature*; that he has reason as a *natural faculty* of his soul, by which he can discern things that are *rational*; that he has a *sinful nature*, is a *sinner*, and the like; all which necessarily suppose *moral agency*. So that Mr. Barclay's scheme stands *justly* charged with *confusion* and *contradiction*, notwithstanding Dr. Morgan's attempts to *defend* it. And tho' the Doctor pretends, that his scheme of the condition of man in the fall is the *true scripture account* of the matter, yet in this, I think, the scriptures are *injured*; because I am persuaded, that, if you will examine *them with care and attention*, you will not be able

to discover any such thing. According to the account there given, the *conduct* of Adam and Eve bespeaks them as much moral agents, *immediately after* their eating the forbidden fruit, as *before*; and thus they continued all their lives, for any thing that appears to the contrary; so that it does not appear, that the fall had any *such effect* upon them, as to *destroy* their *moral agency*. And thus it has been with their *posterity* thro' all ages, excepting some *few individuals*, in which the case has been otherwise, thro' some *defect* or *disorder* in the *particular constitutions* of those individuals. And as Adam and Eve were the common parents of mankind, from which our species deriv'd their *constitutions*; so our *reasoning faculty*, which with the power of self-motion constitutes us *moral agents*, grows up and ripens with the *human constitution*; is disorder'd and recover'd by, and with the disorder and recovery of *that constitution*; weakens and decays with it, and the like. All which make it as *evident*, and are as *good proof* that moral agency is the result of the human constitution, and not of any supervening grace, as the nature of the thing will admit; it stands upon the same foot with, and is proved the same way, as *seeing*, or *hearing*, or any other power of the mind is proved to be the *result* of the human constitution. And this, I presume, will pass for proof with others, however it may, with respect to Dr. Morgan; and possibly with him too, notwithstanding his *demand* of proof, in the present case. For tho' he maintains that his scheme is *true christianity*; that his performance is a defence of *christianity itself*, and the like fine things, with which he embellishes and sets off his discourse; yet, to do him justice, I think, he does not pretend that it is the *truth* of the case, but chuses to make the *Bible* rather than *himself* answerable for the



the scheme he has advanced. And whatever concern the Doctor is under to support and maintain christianity; yet, I think, and I am not singular in my opinion, that his performances manifestly tend to *subvert* it, by his fathering such principles upon the christian revelation, as render it *justly contemptible*.

What end Dr. *Morgan* had in view, in his engaging in this controversy, I do not pretend to judge of; but this I say, that as he has used me *ill*, without any *provocation*; so he has *injured* the christian religion, under a shew of *defending* it. For what can render it more ridiculous, than that *wild* and *confused contradictory* scheme which he charges it with; in which man in the fall is consider'd as having the *capacity of natural reason itself*; and likewise that he has *natural liberty*, and yet is *destitute of moral agency*? That is to say, man has what constitutes him a *moral agent*, and yet *wants* moral agency. Again, man in the fall has *natural liberty*, and yet is absolutely subjected to the power of the devil and his own lusts; he has *natural liberty*; and yet his appetites and passions are invincible; that is, man in the fall has *natural liberty*, but *is not at liberty to use it*. This is confusion and contradiction, and thus it will continue to be, except the Doctor by some very *nice distinction*, like that betwixt *certainly* and *absolute certainty*, can discharge it from it. However, to conclude the matter, I will leave it to the world to judge betwixt us, who is doing the greatest *honour* or *dishonour*, *service* or *disservice*, to the christian religion. And now to proceed,

Mr. *Beaven* has likewise appeared; a *second* time, in Mr. *Barclay's* defence; though, I think, to as little purpose as at *first*. I shall not follow him thro' all the windings and divisions, by which he either *diverts* or *perplexes* the question, but only  
give

give a short view of the case; and thereby you will see the *confusion* of his *scheme* and the *groundlessness* of his *triumphs*. Man, as I have elsewhere shewn, is, in his natural capacity, a *moral agent*; that is, he has in him the faculties of *intelligence* and *activity*; intelligence, by which he is capable of *thinking* or *taking in ideas*, of discerning and judging of the fitness or unfitness, the good or evil of actions, in a *moral sense*, or when taken in a moral view; and activity, by which he is capable of *motion* or *action*, that is, of *moving* his own body, and other bodies thereby, to the performance of such actions, and the serving such purposes, whether good, or evil, in a *moral sense*, and under that \* consideration, as he voluntarily chuses to apply them to, from such motives as are present to his mind, and are to him the *ground* and *reason* of those actions. This is evidently the case, with respect to *moral agency*; and this is evidently the case of *man*, as he is a moral agent. And from hence it will follow, not only that man has natural ability, or an inherent power to do both good and evil, in a moral sense, and under that consideration; but also that he has natural ability or inherent power to do all that good and evil, which comes within the reach of his agency; and, consequently, he has natural ability to do all that good which is his *duty* to do, or that is *necessary* to render him *acceptable* to his Maker. For as no good action can possibly be a man's duty, which is above his agency to perform; so God is not such an *unreasonable* Being as to make such actions *necessary* to his acceptance.

\* By [under that consideration] I only intend [known to be such.]

If it should be asked, whether God may not require some actions from men, which are *above* their natural liberty to perform, and by a *supernatural operation* enable them to perform those actions? and, in such a case, whether it is not mens *duty* to perform them? and whether such performance be not *necessary* to render them acceptable to God? I *answer*; what God *may* do; and what he *does* do, are *two* distinct questions or cases. God may, if he please, require a blind man to *distinguish colours*, and a cripple to *walk*, and he may give *sight* to the one and *strength* to the other, for the performance of them; but that he does do this doth not appear, at least, but in extraordinary cases. The laws, which God hath given men to direct their behaviour by, require the performance only of *such actions*, as come within the reach of *human agency*, considering every man's *circumstances* and *condition* in life, and not such as are *above* the reach of that agency. And if any man thinks otherwise, then, surely, it lies upon him to produce those instances, and shew in *what cases* God requires more from men than they have natural ability to perform. And, if there are any such instances, this does not render men more acceptable to God than otherwise they would be; because our acceptableness does not arise from the *largeness* or the *increase* of our abilities, but from the *good disposition* there is in us to make a *right use* of the ability we have, whether it be great or small, natural or supernatural. And therefore in all such cases, supernatural ability is not necessary to render men acceptable to God, but only to perform *such actions*, and to serve *such purposes*, as, without that ability, they were not capable of doing. So that a man will be equally acceptable to God in the *right use* of his *natural ability*, as in the *right use* of that and of all the supernatural ability, which

which may be supposed to be added to it. And as man is a moral agent, so he is hereby perfectly free and at liberty, either to neglect, to make a right use of, or to abuse his faculties, as he pleases. All force, whether it be to good, or to evil, being absolutely inconsistent with and destructive of such agency; and every thing, short of force, being no other than excitement; man, therefore, as a moral agent, has and must have power, and be at liberty, either to follow or reject every excitement, which is made present to his mind, either by argument, or any other way; and whether what he is excited to be good, or evil.

If it should be asked, as in pages 23, 24, of Mr. Beaven's tract, viz. "If goodness be thought so inseparable from the nature of God, as that it is not possible for him to do evil; what, if evil be thought so inseparable from the sinful nature of fallen and degenerate man, as that it is not possible for him to do good, regarding spiritual things, without the good and supernatural operation of God in him, to enlighten and quicken him thereunto; is this to limit the agency of man, more than the agency of God is supposed to be limited, as above?" I answer: If this were admitted, then, there would not be agency, but fatality, or being acted upon by some foreign agent, in either case. For if God were under a necessity of doing good, and men were under a like necessity of doing evil, they would not be agents. And the good, or evil, which would be performed by their instrumentality, would not be good, or evil, in a moral sense; that is, God would not be a good Being, nor man an evil being, upon the account of it; agency and necessity being directly opposite and contrary to each other, whether Mr. Beaven discerns it, or not. And if necessity does not take place, in either case, but moral



*moral agency*; and God is a *good Being*, upon the account of that good which is performed by him; and man an *evil being*, upon the account of that evil which he performs; then, it will unavoidably follow, that God has *power* and is at *liberty* to *do evil*, and that man has *power* and is at *liberty* to *do good*. And tho' there is not any thing in nature, which affords an *excitement* or *temptation* to God to *do evil*, and from hence arises a *moral certainty*, that he never will do it; yet this is by no means the case of man, with respect to *good*; because nature affords a *proper motive* or excitement to him, as a moral agent, to *do good*. And he is at liberty to act from that motive, and so can do it, if *he will*; and that too in things *spiritual*, if by *spiritual* be meant what is good in a *moral sense*. But if that be not meant, then, the distinction of things *spiritual*, I think, is an *amusement*; it is using a term, without any fixed idea to it.

If it should be asked, whether man can be an *agent* and a *patient* also? I answer: He can be both in *different* actions, but not in the same action. A *physician* may recommend to me frequent walking, as proper for my health; and, in my *receiving* his advice, I am a *patient only*; and if I *follow* that advice, and walk accordingly, in this I am an *agent only*. The case is the same, if God should kindly interpose, and make any motive or proposition present to my mind; in this I am a *patient only*. And if that motive or proposition be the *ground* or *reason* of my acting, in that action, I am an *agent only*. To be an agent and a patient, in the *same action*, is a manifest contradiction; it is to act and not to act in the same action. So that, in every good action which man performs, he is an *agent only*; and if God were to interpose and perform that good action *in*, and *by him*, in that case, he would be a *patient only*.

If it should be asked, whether *two agents can co-operate or work together*, in producing the *same actions*? I answer: that *two agents* may act together, and produce the *same effect*, but not the *same action*. *Two men* may act together, and by their united strength *lift a weight*, or *ring a bell*, which neither of them could do singly; but, then, in this case, their actions are as *distinct* as their persons; the one acts, and the other acts, and both their actions produce the *same effect*. The case is the same, if *God* should interpose and co-operate or act with man, in producing any effect. As far as the agency of *God* is concerned, so far it is *God's action*; and as far as *man's* agency is concerned, so far it is *man's action*, and no farther. Neither is man *commendable* or *blameable* in any action, any farther than his *own agency* is exerted in that action. And, here, I presume, my reader will see how *vain* and *trifling* Mr. Beaven is, in garnishing his book with this general title, *viz. God's Agency and Man's Agency co-working, in the Salvation of Man*. For if by *co-working* he means that *God* and *men* co-operate, to produce the *same action*; this is an *absurdity*, and is, therefore, *false*, as I have before shewn. And if he means that *God* and *man* co-operate, to produce the *same effect*; tho' this may be true, yet it is not to the purpose; because man's *acceptableness* to *God* does not arise from what *God* does, but only from what *man himself* does, in producing that effect, *God* may represent or make present to the sinner's mind a view of the *vileness* of his *conduct*, and the *danger* he is in, upon that account; and this may be to the sinner the *ground* and *reason* of his *repentance* and *reformation*. Here we see *God acts*, and *man acts*; but, then, it is not what *God* does, but only what the *sinner* does, which renders him

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the *object* of divine acceptance, and which is the *ground* and *reason* of God's favour to him. God represents to the sinner a *view* of his condition ; but, then, if the sinner does not *repent* and *amend*, upon that view, which is *wholly his own act*, God's act will be so far from saving him, that, on the contrary, it will be an aggravation of his *condemnation*. And, in this case, there is no *new*, no *supernatural ability* afforded or added to the sinner, neither does God's act enable him to do what he could not do, antecedent to, or without that act ; but only hereby he is applied to in a *proper way*, as he is a *moral agent*, in order to prevail upon him to do what he *could do*, but *would not*, or *did not*. And if such a *co-working*, as aforesaid, be what Mr. *Beaven* intends, in the work of man's salvation, then, his putting the aforesaid *title* to his book, and offering it as a *rejoinder* to mine, is *fool practising* ; because it is what I have not opposed. The question betwixt me and Mr. *Barclay* is not, whether the agency of God is concerned, in the salvation of man ? but whether *man* in his natural capacity, as man, has in him a natural ability, or an inherent power to *do good*, in a *moral sense*, without a supernatural influence to enable him thereunto ? And this question is such a *choke-pill* to Mr. *Beaven*, that he had rather introduce *twenty* other questions, than confine himself to it ; which, in the present case, he ought to do. And,

As man is at liberty to *neglect*, to make a *right use* of, or to *abuse* his *natural faculties*, as he pleases ; so, if he does neglect or abuse them, this does not *destroy* his *faculties*, nor *disable* him from making a right use of them. If a man is *stolishful*, and thereby is *ignorant* of what he otherwise might and would have known, he does not hereby fall under a *necessity* of always continuing so, except some foreign



reign agent interpose and *rouse* him out of it; but, on the contrary, he has *power*, and is at *liberty* to *rouse himself*, that is, to call his neglected faculties into *exercise*, and to use the means for the attainment of that *knowledge*, which, thro' his sloth and negligence, he has hitherto been ignorant of. In like manner, if a man should invade his neighbour's *property*, or perform any other *vicious* action, or if he should *neglect* what was his *duty* to do; in such a case, he does not hereby fall under a *necessity* of going on in that practice always, except some foreign agent interpose and *prevent* him; but, on the contrary, he has *power*, and is at *liberty* to look back upon his actions or his neglect of duty, to see the unfitness and vileness of it, and to correct and amend his ways for the future. And, if he should *persist* in his wickedness, his *after-actions* are as much the produce of *choice* or *election*, as the *first*. He had power, and was at liberty, to have chose and done the contrary; and this renders those actions *criminal*, which otherwise they would not be. And, therefore, supposing *all mankind*, without any exception, have *abused* their *agency*, that is, have entered into a wicked course of life, and *carelessly* gone on in it, without reflecting on their conduct, or have *obstinately* persisted in it, notwithstanding such reflections; what advantage will this afford to Mr. Barclay's scheme? Why, truly, none at all; because the *neglect* or *abuse* of man's natural faculties does not *destroy* or *take away* the right use of them; he has power, and is at liberty rightly to use them, *after he has abused them*, as well as before that abuse; and because the question betwixt me and Mr. Barclay is not, whether all men have abused their faculties? but whether *man in the fall* has natural ability, without a supernatural influence, *rightly* to use them,



them, or not? So that here is no such *concession* in favour of Mr. Barclay's scheme, as Mr. Beaven vainly boasts of. But, says Mr. Beaven, if all mankind have abused their faculties, then, supernatural influences are *necessary*, or *useful* to the salvation of all. Now, if this be admitted, what advantage would Mr. Barclay's scheme receive hereby? Why just as much as in the former case. Supernatural influences are necessary, or useful to all; but, then, what are they useful for? Not, surely, to put men in a capacity of *moral agency*; because that they are *without* those influences; not to furnish men with ability to do their *duty*, because they must have such ability, *antecedent* to the divine interposition; for otherwise there could be no such thing as *duty* in the case; but they are useful, or necessary, to *persuade* men, if they will be prevailed upon; that being the subject of their *own choice*, to make a *right use* of that ability they already have. And as the question betwixt me and Mr. Barclay is no, whether supernatural influences are useful, or necessary, to answer the purpose aforesaid? but only, whether man *has*, or *has not* natural *ability* for the performance of his duty? so the pretended *concessions*, which Mr. Beaven makes the grounds of his *triumphs* over me, are of no service to Mr. Barclay's cause. And if my concessions are such as Mr. Beaven pretends, so that Mr. Barclay and I are of the same opinion herein; how, then, come my principles to be so very *injurious* and *hurtful*, as they are represented to be? And how comes Mr. Beaven to represent me as "*disclaiming*" and *exploding* all supernatural help from Jesus Christ to men, even under the most inveterate "*habits of wickedness*"; and that with an open "*face*" too? *page 38.* Surely, if Mr. Barclay's principles and mine are so nearly allied, with respect

spect to supernatural influences, as Mr. *Beaven* represents them; then, what he has said above bears hard upon Mr. *Barclay's* principles, as well as mine; or rather, if the case be, as he represents it, then, it is an *unjust* charge upon us both. But to return:

As man is capable of neglecting or abusing his faculties, and thereby of incurring the divine displeasure; so he is capable of being *applied to* by other agents, in order to his repentance and reformation, and thereby to restore him again to the divine favour. He is capable of being *awakened*, or *called upon*, to consider his ways, to reflect upon his conduct, to see how vile and wicked his actions are; and what unhappiness and misery he is drawing upon himself. And this is the end and purpose which *divine revelation* and *divine supernatural influences* are subservient to, in the present case. So that the usefulness of supernatural influences does not arise from man's *incapacity* to reflect upon and consider his ways, nor from a *natural incapacity* to correct and amend them; because he is always capable of these, as he is a *moral agent* and an *accountable creature*; his *natural ability* to do good and evil, in a moral sense, being the same both *with* and *without* a supernatural influence. But the usefulness of such influences arises from men's *voluntarily* persisting in a wicked course of life; for when that is their case, as it is exceeding *kind* and *good* in God that he will use any means to bring them to repentance and reformation; so his applying to them, as above, is a *proper way* to work upon them, as *moral agents*, to bring them to that repentance and reformation. And as God's kindly interposing, as aforesaid, is not an *evidence against*, but *for* man's having natural ability to do his duty; so St. *Paul* uses it as an argument to persuade men to a *right use* and application of that

ability : *Wont out*, says he, *your own salvation with fear and trembling ; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure*, Phil. ii. 12, 13. Which is as if he had said ; seeing *Almighty God*, who reaps no advantage from the good actions of men, and yet, out of mere *good-will* to them, kindly interposes and awakens in them a sense of what they ought *both to will and to do* ; how much more ought men to use their utmost *care and diligence* to conduct their actions aright, forasmuch as hereby they pursue their *own good*, and secure to themselves their *own salvation* ? For if *God* shews *such a regard* for the happiness of his creatures ; then, certainly, those creatures ought to shew the *utmost care and regard* for themselves.

Thus, Sir, I have given you a short view of the case, that is, of the *natural condition of man in the fall* ; and, I think, have discharged it from that *confusion and absurdity*, which Mr. Beaven and his scheme have perplex'd it with. What remains is to inquire, wherein the most *material difference* lies betwixt me and Mr. Barclay, with respect to the condition of man in the fall ; what the *question* arising from hence is ; and what *proof* has been offered on either side.

Mr. Barclay maintains, that man, as he is in the fall, *cannot do good*, with respect to things spiritual, by which I understand what is good in a moral sense, without a supernatural influence ; and that, without such influence, he is either by his own natural composition, or by the agency of the serpent, *necessarily determined to do evil* ; and that this is the natural condition of *all mankind*, both *Jews and Gentiles*. This, I think, appears plainly to be his sense, if his words have any *fixed ideas* to them ; and, therefore, all that complaint which has been made against me, of misrepresenting Mr. Barclay, is



is perfectly groundless. And that this is a *just* representation of Mr. Barclay's, Mr. Beaven's, and the Quakers sense herein, is most evident from Mr. Beaven's own representation thereof; allowing him to be a proper judge in the case. His words are as follows; page 23, 24. "If *goodness* be thought so inseparable from the nature of God, as that it is not possible for him to *do evil*; what, if *evil* be thought so inseparable from the *sinful nature* of fallen and degenerate man, as that it is not possible for him to *do good*, regarding spiritual things, without the good and supernatural operation of God in him, to enlighten and quicken him thereunto? Is this to *limit* the agency of man, more than the agency of God is supposed to be limited, as above?" Here we see Mr. Beaven considers *evil* so inseparable from the *sinful nature* of fallen man, as that it is not possible for him to *do good*, regarding spiritual things, without a supernatural influence. Which is the same in effect with what I have set forth in the *two propositions*, by which I have expressed Mr. Barclay's sense of this matter. And tho' the representation, which is here given of the condition of the *natural man*, be put by way of *query*; yet, I think, it may justly be presumed, that Mr. Beaven intended to express *his*, and Mr. Barclay's, and the Quakers sense of the helpless condition of man in the *fall* hereby; or else his arguing from a necessity of doing good, and an impossibility of doing evil in God, for a like necessity of *doing evil*, and an impossibility of *doing good* in man, regarding spiritual things, without a supernatural influence, is no way to his purpose. And as Mr. Barclay's sense of the condition of man in the *fall* is, as I have represented it above; so I maintain, in opposition to him, that man, as man, or in his *natural capacity*, is a *moral agent*, and, as such, has



in him natural ability, or an inherent power to do both *good* and *evil*, in a *moral sense*, without a supernatural influence; yea, that he has natural ability to do *all* that *good* which is his *duty* to do, or that is *necessary* to render him acceptable to his Maker. So that the state of the case or point in controversy is resolved into this short issue, *viz.* whether man, in his natural condition as man, *can*, or *cannot* do good, in a *moral sense*, without a supernatural influence? The case is plain and obvious, and may easily be brought to a decision; it is but to prove the *negative*, or the *affirmative* side, of this single question, and then the controversy *is*, or at least *ought* to be, at an end.

I have offered what I esteem *proof*, on the *affirmative* side; and shewn that man in his natural capacity, without a supernatural influence, is a *moral agent*. Now, admitting that I have proved this point, it will unavoidably follow, that man has *power*, and is at *liberty* not only to do both good and evil, in a moral sense, without a supernatural influence; but also that he has natural ability, or an inherent power, to do *all* that *good* which is his *duty* to do, or is *necessary* to render him *acceptable* to his *Maker*, without such influences. For whatever *impotency* may attend our species upon the *fall* of *Adam*, if that fall has not *destroyed* our *moral agency*, as it is most evident it has not; then, it will unavoidably follow, that the state of man is as I have represented it; because, how weak soever man may be supposed to be, his duty must bear a *proportion* to the ability he has, whether it be great, or small. And, therefore, supposing an action to be morally good, yet if a man has not ability to perform that action, or to discover the moral goodness of it, then, that action *cannot* be his duty in those circumstances, neither  
 the performance of it necessary to  
 his

his acceptance. The sum of the point is this ; I have proved that man, in his natural capacity, is a *moral agent*, and, as such, has power and is at liberty to do *all that good* which is his duty to do, without a supernatural influence ; and, therefore, can do it, if he *will* ; and, consequently, that supernatural influences are, or may be *necessary*, or *useful*, not to render men capable of doing their duty, that implying a *contradiction* ; because, where there is not a *capacity*, there can be no *duty* ; but to prevail upon men to do what was their duty, and, consequently, what they were capable of performing, *antecedent* to such influence.

Mr. Beaven, in favour of Mr. Barclay, opposes me. But what has he done ? has he *invalidated* the *evidence* I brought to prove my point ? or has he proved the contrary ? that is, has he shewed that the *natural result* of the constitution of man is *not* moral agency, and that *man*, in his natural capacity is *not* a moral agent ? No ; this he has not done ; this he could not do ; and yet this was his point ; and, if he had done this, then, it would have follow'd that man, as he is in the fall, *would not* have had a *sinful nature*, *would not* have been a *sinner* ; which upon the *Quakers* scheme he is supposed to be. But, then, the question will return, what has Mr. Beaven done ? To which, I think, this general answer may be given ; that he has run into *divisions*, by which he has either *diverted* or *perplexed* the question. He pretends, that I have made several *concessions*, in favour of Mr. Barclay, the *groundlessness* of which I have before shewn, and likewise that man may be an *agent* and a *patient also* ; and that *God and man co-work*, in the *salvation of man*, and the like ; all which are *foreign* to the question, as I have shewn. He likewise vouches the authority of *scripture*, for his opinion ; but, surely, the *scriptures* cannot

make a *false proposition true*, which is the present case; tho', I grant, he is not singular herein; almost *all errors* among christians being father'd upon the *scriptures*.

Upon the whole, I observe, that as Mr. *Barclay's* scheme stands charged with *error, confusion,* and *contradiction*; so Mr. *Beaven* has not been able to *free* it from this charge. And if he should think fit to appear any more, in Mr. *Barclay's* defence, I desire him to come to the point, which, as yet, he has avoided. And I here, once more, remind him what the point is, *viz.* not what man is, and what his abilities are *by*, and *with* and *under* a supernatural influence; but what man is, and what his abilities are, consider'd *abstractedly from*, and *without* such influence. Mr. *Barclay* maintains, and Mr. *Beaven* has undertaken to defend him herein, that man as *man*, or man in the *fall*, is either by his *own natural composition*, or by the *agency* of the *serpent*, unavoidably determin'd to *do evil*; and that he cannot *do good*, regarding spiritual things, by which I understand what is good in a moral sense, without a supernatural influence. This I call an *error*; and a *misrepresentation of human nature*; and, I think, have proved it to be so, by shewing that man, in his natural capacity, is a *moral agent*, and, consequently, that human nature is not what Mr. *Barclay* has represented it to be. Now, if Mr. *Beaven* has any thing farther to offer which will *invalidate* the *evidence*, whereby I have proved my side of the question, and which will prove the contrary; I shall think myself concerned to consider it. But, if he shall proceed in *perplexing* and *diverting* the question, then, I presume, it will not be expected that I should follow him, in such a wild-goose-chase.

What I have farther to observe is, that as in  
Mr.

Mr. Barclay's, Mr. Beaven's, and the Quakers scheme, man in the fall is consider'd as *incapable* of doing good, regarding spiritual things, without a supernatural influence; and that he is unavoidably determin'd to *do evil*; whilst at the same time man in the fall is allow'd to be a *rational creature*, who has reason, as a *natural faculty* of his soul, by which he can discern things that are *rational*; that he has a *sinful nature*, is a *sinner*, and the like; this, taken together, I call *confusion* and *contradiction*; and, I presume, it evidently appears to be so to every considering man, who attends to it. And as Mr. Barclay's scheme is *confused* and *contradictory*, so this I particularly recommended to the consideration of his adherents, in my *second* letter, presuming they ought either to *clear* his scheme from that confusion and contradiction, or else to *give it up*. But, seeing they do neither, this gives me an occasion of troubling you with a *fourth* letter, in order to enquire into the *cause* of such a procedure, which I take to be this. The Quakers having been train'd up in the belief of this doctrine, *viz.* that man, considered barely as man, cannot *do good*, regarding things spiritual, without a supernatural influence; and that he is unavoidably determin'd to *do evil*; and, then, reading the Bible with their minds *prepossessed* with this opinion, they are led to think that it is plainly and clearly taught therein. And as the Bible is allow'd to be the *rule of truth*, and the *word of God*, so whatever doctrine is therein contained must be *truth*; and, consequently, whilst the Bible appears to them in *this light*, the way to their *conviction* is *barr'd up*. That, then, which lies before me, is not to make good my side of the question, that being sufficiently cleared and proved already; but to remove, if it can be done, what stands in the way of the Quakers *conviction*.



The *Bible*, like a *pack-horse*, is made to bear every burden, which *weak or designing men* are pleased to lay upon it ; there not being any doctrine, how *absurd* and *ridiculous* soever, when adopted into this, or that, or the other scheme of christianity, but its vouchers have some *texts of scripture* to father it upon. Thus, the doctrines of *transubstantiation*, and of *absolute election* and *reprobation*, are, by those who adhere to them, said to be contained in the *scripture* ; tho' the one of these is *repugnant to*, and thereby is shewn to be false by our *senses*, and the other by our *reason*. And tho' perhaps, there has not been any set of men, who have been *more divided* in their religious opinions than the *body of christians* ; yet each and every of these have been ready to lay claim to the *Bible*, as a *common parent* to their principles, tho' *different* and *contradictory* to each other. And thus it is, with respect to the point in question ; it being suppos'd that the following proposition, viz. *That man cannot do good, regarding spiritual things, without a supernatural influence*, is contained therein. I shall not, however, take upon me to examine, what is the *true sense* and *meaning* of this or that text of scripture, with respect to the point in hand ; this would be a work both *endless* and *useless*. It would be *endless*, because after *ten* or *twenty* texts are examin'd, with respect to their *true sense*, so many more may be introduced to be examined, and so on, and that, with respect to both sides of the question ; and this, surely, would be an *endless work*. It would likewise be *useless*, with respect to *fixing* and *settling* the point in debate ; because, after such an examination, each party may think their sense of scripture is the *true sense*, and so they would end where they began. This, I imagine, has often been the case, and is likely to be so now. And, therefore,

therefore, what I propose is, that as the *Bible* is appealed to, as the *rule of truth*; so I shall, *first*, shew what *qualifications* are *absolutely necessary* to take place in it, in order to render it *capable* of being such a *rule*. *Secondly*, I shall apply this to the point in hand, by shewing how any proposition which may be supposed to be contained in *scripture*, is affected by it. From which it will appear, that whilst we consider the *Bible*, as the *rule of truth*, and the *word of God*, the following proposition, *viz. That man cannot do what is morally good, without a supernatural influence*, ought not to be admitted as the *sense of scripture*, or as *contained therein*, and, consequently, that the urging of texts of scripture, to prove the above proposition, is *trifling* in itself, and is offering a manifest *injury* to the *Bible*. *Thirdly*, and *lastly*, I shall make some short reflections upon the whole. And,

*First*, I shall shew, what *qualifications* are *absolutely necessary* to render the *Bible* *capable* of being the *rule of truth*; I say, capable of being the *rule of truth*; for tho' those qualifications do not *constitute* or *make* the *Bible* such a *rule*; yet, if they were wanting, it would, in the nature of the thing, be *unqualified* for it. And, therefore, those qualifications are, and must be absolutely and essentially necessary, to render the *Bible* *capable* of being the *rule of truth*. By the *Bible's* being the *rule of truth*, I mean it to be such a *just* and *certain* foundation of *assent*, as will not *deceive* us, in *all* or *any* of those points which are *discover'd* by it, and whose *credibility* arises from, and is founded upon it. And,

*First*, The *Bible* must be *consistent* with the *nature* and the *truth* of things, in order to render it *capable* of being the *rule of truth*. And, here, I beg leave to re-assume the argument already laid down,

down, in my discourse concerning *Persecution*; and to observe, that if there are any propositions in the *Bible*, which, when rightly understood, are *repugnant* to the *nature*, or to the *truth* of things, all such propositions must be allowed to be *false*. And if the *Bible* lays down a false proposition in *one* instance, and with relation to *one* point, then, it may do the same in *any other* instance, and with relation to *any other* point. I say, that this may be the case, for any thing we know to the contrary; seeing it has not given us any *infallible* rule, by which we can certainly judge which propositions in the *Bible* are *true*, and which are *otherwise*. And from hence it will follow, that if the *Bible* be admitted as the *rule of truth*, then, the fore-mention'd qualification must be admitted as an *essential property* of this rule; and, consequently, every proposition in the *Bible*, which, in its *literal* sense, is repugnant to the nature, or to the truth of things, must be understood not *literally*, but *figuratively*. And, that I may not be misunderstood, with regard to the point in hand, I will give an instance; *John* vii. 38. *He that believeth on me, saith Christ, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* Now, I say, that if the *Bible* be admitted as the *rule of truth*, then, this proposition must be understood *figuratively*; because the terms of which it is composed, if understood literally, that is, if we apply to them those ideas which common usage has fix'd to them; then, the proposition is plainly *repugnant* to the *nature* and *truth* of things. And, *first*, it is repugnant to, or an impossibility in nature, for rivers of water to flow out of a *man's belly*; supposing, by the term *belly*, be meant that part of a man which is commonly called by that *name*; and, by the terms *rivers of water*, be meant the flowing or running of such *large quantities* of water, as we commonly express by the term *rivers*; which is the present case. So  
that,



that, if the foremention'd proposition be understood *literally*, then, it is repugnant to, and an impossibility in nature, and, therefore, is *absolutely false*. Again, it is repugnant to the truth of things, that is, it is a proposition manifestly false in fact; seeing believing in Christ has not, in any one instance, produced such an effect, as that out of the believer's belly have flow'd *ivers of water*, as aforesaid. And as any proposition, which is repugnant to the nature, or truth of things, cannot possibly be true; so from hence it will follow, that the *Bible's* being consistent with the nature and truth of things is *absolutely* and *essentially necessary*, to render it *capable* of being the rule of truth. Again,

*Secondly*, Another qualification *absolutely necessary*, to render the *Bible* *capable* of being the rule of truth, is its being *uniform* and *consistent with itself*. If the *Bible* should contain propositions, which, when rightly understood, are plainly *inconsistent with*, and *contradictory* to each other; then, one or other of them must, confessedly, be *false*. For tho' each of those propositions, when consider'd alone, is not repugnant to the nature of things, and so, in that respect, either of them *may* be true; yet if, when they are taken together, one is an *apparent contradiction* to the other, of necessity, one of them must be *false*. And if the *Bible* lays down a false proposition in *one instance*, it may in another, as I observ'd above. And, consequently, if this were the case, then, nothing could be *fairly* concluded from the *Bible*, and the *Bible* would justly be *excluded* from being the rule of truth, in any point whatever. And, as the *Bible* must be uniform and consistent with itself, in order to render it *capable* of being the rule of truth; so, consequently, if there are any propositions in it which seem to *clash with*, and to *contradict* each other, then, one of these must *yield* to the other; that



that is, the sense of one or other of them must be *so changed*, from what it appears to be, as that those seeming contradictory propositions may be perfectly reconciled. Again,

*Thirdly*, and *lastly*, Another qualification *absolutely necessary*, to render the *Bible* capable of being the rule of truth, is, that it must be a *proper application* to the *understandings* of men; by which I mean, that the author must *intend* to be understood in all \* that is therein contained; and, consequently, that the *Bible* must contain only *such subjects*, as are discernible by, and come within the reach of the *human understanding*. And those subjects must be deliver'd in *such a way*, as is likely not to *mislead*, but to *inform mankind*. For if the *Bible* was intended to be understood, only in *some* parts of it, and if the author intended that the other parts should not be understood; then, the *Bible* is *unqualified* for being the rule of truth, in any point; because it has not given us any rule by which we can judge, which parts are *intended* to be understood, and which not; so that those parts of the *Bible* which seem to us most plain, and from which, we think, we receive a true information, may be the *most difficult*, and may only serve more effectually to *mislead* us. I say, that this *may* be the case, for any thing we know, or for any grounds we have, from whence we may justly conclude the contrary. For as every proposition contained in the *Bible* is expressed in words, which *common usage* has fixed ideas to, and as we have no rule laid down in the *Bible*, by which we can form a judgment in the present case; so from hence it will follow, that we must be under the *greatest uncertainty*, which propo-

\* *Note*, I here except all prophecies out of the case; for as they cannot, in the nature of the thing, be evidences, until they are completed; so the understanding them, before their completion, is of no use.

represent it, as *unworthy* of that Being whom we consider, as its Author.

*Note:* Those propositions in the *Bible*, which are *self-evident*, or which are the *necessary result* of propositions that are self-evident, that is, whose evidence arises from the *nature of things*; these are out of the case; because these are true in themselves, and, upon a due examination, will evidently appear to be so, whether the *Bible* be admitted as the rule of truth, or not. So that the propositions, which come into the present question, are such only, as are *discoverable* by the *Bible*, and whose *credibility* arises from, and is founded upon it.

If it should be urged, that tho' there is not any thing deliver'd in the *Bible*, with an *intention* to mislead mankind, nor any subjects contained there in, that are *absolutely* above the reach of the human understanding; yet there may be such as are above it, considering man in his *fallen state*; and that God may interpose, and, by the *operation* of his *spirit*, enable men to understand the scriptures, and thereby to take in those subjects, which, antecedent to his interposition, they were not capable of discerning. I answer; this is representing Almighty God, as acting a very *strange* part by his creatures; man is consider'd as *fallen*, before the revelation was given, and this revelation is given him in his *fallen state*, consider'd as such; yea, his being fallen is the *occasion* of this gift of God to him; and, yet, it is supposed that *part* of it is *above* his capacity to understand. And this is so intermixed, without any *rule of distinction*, as that not any thing can be *justly* and *certainly* concluded from it, which must render it, in a great measure, *useless*. And supposing God does *interpose*, and, by his spirit, impress upon men's minds those *truths*, which lie *concealed* in the scriptures, and give men

a *capacity* to take in those subjects, which, antecedent to his interposition, they were not capable of *discerning*, yet this does not alter the case at all; because it is not from the *Bible*, but from the *spirit*, that fallen man receive his impressions, his informations, and his capacity, as aforesaid; so that the *Bible*, upon this supposition, is but of *little use* to mankind. And upon a supposition, that fallen man is under an *incapacity* to understand the scriptures; then, I would ask, how any man can *certainly know*, or have any *rational satisfaction*, that the impressions he is under are *divine*, or that the ideas he takes in by those impressions are *truths*, or not.

If it should be said, that those impressions *evidence themselves* to be *divine*, and consequently, that the propositions, convey'd or discovered by those impressions, are *divine truths*. I answer; that if those impressions evidence themselves to the *men* who receive them, that they are *divine*; then, this supposes some *common principle*, which all impressions are to be *tried* and *judged* of by, and likewise a *capacity*, in fallen man to *examine* and *try* those impressions by that principle, and to *distinguish* and *judge*, whether they are *divine*, or not. But, then, this is giving to fallen man; with one hand, what has been *taken from him* with the other; this is *allowing* him that capacity, which he is supposed to be *destitute* of. For if there be some *common principle*, which all impressions are to be tried by, and if there be in fallen man a *capacity* to distinguish and judge of all impressions by that principle; then, there is in fallen man a *capacity* to discern and judge of *divine revelations* also; because all *revelations* and *impressions* stand upon a foot, with respect of their *divinity*, and because the same capacity, which enables a man to take in the *idea* of a proposition by a *divine impression*, will

will enable him to take in the *idea* of the same proposition by a *divine revelation*.

If it should be said, that the *truth* of the proposition, and the *divinity* of the impression, are evinced by the *pleasure* and *satisfaction* that arise from such impressions, and from the truths convey'd by them; I answer, that this cannot afford any *rational satisfactions* and that it makes way for any *delusion*; because, when a man is persuaded that he is under a *divine* impression, and that the proposition, which is present to his mind, is a *divine truth*; this persuasion will be a *foundation* for pleasure and satisfaction to him, whether it be *well* or *ill grounded*; that is, whether he be *deluded*, with regard to the *divinity* of that impression, and the *truth* of that proposition, or *not*. Again, if the truth of the proposition, and the divinity of the impression, are to be inferred from the *force* and *strength* of the impression on the mind; then, man is in a very *unguarded* state, and lies open to all *delusion* and *imposition*; because not only when we are *asleep*, but also in our *waking hours*, many ideas strike *forcibly* on the imagination; and, if they are cherished and indulged, will make a *strong impression* on the mind, will raise our *desires*, our *hopes*, or *fears*, or whatever *passion* they are suited to affect. And this will be the case, whether the object be *real*, or *fictitious*. So that if the *strength* of impressions is made the *mark* of their divinity, then, a door is opened to the most wild and extravagant *enthusiasm*. Again, if the divinity of an impression, and the truth of a proposition thus presented to the mind, are to be inferred from the *conformity* of that proposition to the *scriptures*; then, supposing that the *truth* of the proposition will follow from hence, yet the *divinity* of the impression is *not*, in the least, *proved* by it; because, whilst we consider the Bi-



ble as the word of God, it is very natural for *these* propositions which we discover, or think we discover in it, to occur frequently and strongly to our minds, without a divine impression to produce them.

To apply this to the point in debate, betwixt me and the *Quakers*: I will suppose a man to have this proposition strongly impressed upon his mind, viz. That man cannot do what is morally good, without a supernatural influence, and that the impression and the proposition afford him a great deal of pleasure and delight. Then, the question will be, what rational satisfaction he can have, that the impression is divine, or that the proposition attending it is the truth, if the strength of the impression, or the pleasure which attends it, be made the mark? Then, here is no rational satisfaction, because error and delusion may strike the mind as strongly, and may afford as much pleasure, as truth itself. If the proposition's being consistent with or contained in scripture is made the mark; then, with respect to the divinity of the impression, here is no rational satisfaction, because here is nothing, from whence such a conclusion may justly and certainly be inferred. And, as to the truth of the proposition, the appeal is removed from the impression, and made wholly to the Bible. And, if the evidence, for the truth of the above proposition be supposed to arise only from the scripture, then, man is supposed to be qualify'd to judge of the sense of scripture, independant of any divine impressions; and the scriptures are supposed to have all those qualifications, which are absolutely necessary to render them capable of being the rule of truth; one of which qualifications is, that they must be consistent with nature and the truth of things: for otherwise nothing can rationally and certainly be concluded from them, as I have

have shewn above. And, therefore, if the foregoing proposition, *viz.* That *man cannot do what is morally good, without a supernatural influence*, be repugnant to the nature or truth of things, as I shall hereafter shew that it is repugnant to both; and if the *Bible* be the rule of truth, as it is here supposed to be; then, it will unavoidably follow, not only that the *Quakers misrepresent* the scriptures, by representing them as containing the above proposition, but also that they are not under a *divine impulse*, when that proposition, is impressed upon their minds as a *scripture truth*. Thus, I have gone thro' what I proposed, in the *first* place, and have shewn, what *qualifications* are absolutely necessary to take place in the *Bible*, in order to render it *capable* of being the rule of truth. I now proceed,

*Secondly*, To apply what I have before laid down to the point in hand, by shewing how any proposition, which may be supposed to be contained in scripture, is *affected* by it; from which it will appear, that whilst we consider the *Bible* as the rule of truth, and the word of God, the following proposition, *viz.* That *man cannot do what is morally good, without a supernatural influence*, ought not to be admitted as the sense of scripture, or as contained therein; and, consequently, that the urging texts of scripture, to *prove* the above proposition, is *trifling* in itself, and is offering a manifest *injury* to the *Bible*. And, here, I observe, that tho' the forementioned qualifications do not afford us a rule of judging, what is the *true* sense of scripture in any one instance; yet they do afford a certain rule of judging, what *is not* the sense of scripture in a variety of cases, and so are a proper *guard* and *security* against manifold errors. And, therefore, with respect to any doctrine or proposition, which may be supposed to be contained in scripture, the

question arising from hence will be, whether that doctrine or proposition appears to be *consistent* with, or to be *repugnant* to the *nature* or *truth* of things? If it does not appear to be repugnant to the nature or truth of things, then, it will follow, that the doctrine or proposition *may* be contained in scripture; I say, *may* be contained, because that is all which will follow from hence. For, whether it is contained in scripture, or not, that must be proved from *such* evidence, as is necessary to determine that point. But if any doctrine or proposition, which may be supposed to be contained in scripture, does, upon examination, evidently appear to be *repugnant* to the *nature* or *truth* of things; then, it will unavoidably follow, not only that that doctrine or proposition is *false*, but also that it is *not* contained in scripture. For as the scripture is the *rule* of *truth*, and the *word* of *God*, so it cannot possibly contain in it any *such* doctrine or proposition, as aforesaid; seeing we are assured from the nature of the thing, that God will not, thus attempt to *impose* upon and *mislead* his creatures.

Thus, supposing it should be urged, that the following proposition is contained in scripture, viz. That God has predetermined, that a multitude of men shall be extremely and eternally miserable in another world; and, that this determination is the result of mere sovereign pleasure, considered abstractedly from those men's voluntarily chusing to make themselves the proper object of his displeasure; then, the question will be, whether this proposition be *consistent* with, or *repugnant* to the *nature* or *truth* of things? In answer to which, it is to be observed, that as such a conduct is extremely *unjust* and *cruel*, and contrary to *wisdom* and *true goodness*; and as God cannot but see the *unsuitness* and *vileness* of such a behaviour; and as he cannot possibly

possibly be under any *temptation to evil*; so from hence arises a *moral certainty*, that he will not, out of mere humour, make and ordain his creatures to be extremely and eternally miserable, as aforesaid; and from hence it will follow, not only that the above proposition is *false*, but also that it *cannot* be contained in scripture; because we are assured that God will not publish so notorious a *falsehood* to this world. And, therefore, if any man should attempt to prove the above proposition from the *Bible*, and, in order thereto, should collect a great number of texts, and insist that those texts, when *justly explained* and *rightly understood*, do contain in them that proposition; this would be perfectly *vain* and *trifling*; because as the *Bible* cannot possibly make a *false proposition true*; so it must not be admitted that the *Bible* contains in it *such* a proposition, whilst it is considered as the *rule of truth*, and the *word of God*. And to insist, that it is contained therein, is to offer a manifest injury to the *Bible*. Again,

Supposing it should be urged, that the doctrine of *transubstantiation* is contained in scripture; that is, that a particular composition of particles of matter, which, being applied to the senses, raises in us the *idea* of *bread*, does, instantly, upon the pronouncing a particular form of words, called *consecration*, by a christian priest, being alike applied to the senses, raise in us the *idea* of *flesh*; then, the question arising from hence will be, whether this doctrine be *consistent* with the *nature* and with the *truth* of things? That it is consistent with the nature of things? I think, must be granted; because, I presume, it will be allowed, that God *can*, if he pleases, interpose, and change bread into flesh. This being allowed, the question will be, whether the doctrine of transubstantiation be *consistent* with the *truth* of thing? that is,



whether it be *true*, or *false*, in fact, that God does, thus, interpose, and change bread into flesh, upon, the priest's pronouncing the words of consecration? And forasmuch as it evidently appears from *experience*, that no such change is wrought, as is here supposed, but, on the contrary, the particular composition of particles of matter, upon which the change is said to be made, appears to be bread, *after* consecration, as much as *before* it; so from hence it will unavoidably follow, not only that the doctrine of transubstantiation is *false*, but also that no such doctrine is contained in *scripture*; because we are assured, that God will not be guilty of so much *falsehood* and *imposition*.

If it should be said, that the aforesaid *change* is wrought, and that what was *bread*, before consecration, is *truly flesh*, after it, tho' it appears otherwise to our *senses*; I answer, *what* the particular composition of particles of matter referred to is, when considered abstractedly from the *impression* it makes upon our *senses*, and the *idea* it raises in our *minds* thereby, we know nothing of, nor have any idea concerning it; and, therefore, cannot have any term to express it by. And as its striking our senses in a *particular manner*, and its raising in our minds a *particular idea*, is what alone brings it under the denomination of *bread*; so its striking our senses in the *same manner*, and its raising in our minds the *same idea*, *after* consecration, as *before*, will shew or prove it to be strictly, and properly, and truly *bread*, in *both cases*; and, consequently, that there is no such change as is pretended, because *experience* and *fact* shew the contrary. Again,

Supposing it shall be urged, that the following proposition is contained in the scripture, *viz.* *That man cannot do what is morally good, without*

a *supernatural influence*; then, the question will be, whether this proposition be *consistent* with, or *repugnant* to the *nature* or *truth* of things? In answer to which, I observe, that, in my *Examination* of Mr. Barclay's Principles, and in my former *Reply* to Mr. Beaven, I have shewn that man as man, or in his natural capacity, is a *moral agent*, and, as such, has in him an inherent power, and is at liberty not only to do what is *morally good*, but also all that good which comes within the reach of his agency; and, consequently, all that good which is his *duty* to perform, and which is *necessary* to render him acceptable to his Maker. This being the *truth* of the case, it follows that the above proposition is plainly *repugnant* to the *nature* and *truth* of things. It is repugnant to the nature of things, it being an *absurdity*, and a *contradiction* in terms, to say that a moral agent, which is the case of man, cannot do what is morally good, without a supernatural influence; because moral agency consists in a *power* and *liberty* of doing all that moral good and evil, considered as such, which comes within the reach of that agency. It is likewise *repugnant* to the *truth* of things, because *experience* and *fact* shew the contrary; seeing all that moral good and evil which man performs, in all common cases at least, is performed by that ability which arises from his *natural composition*; and from hence it will follow, not only that the above proposition is *false*, but also that it is *not*, nor *cannot* be, contained in scripture; because the scripture, as it is the rule of truth, and the word of God, cannot possibly contain in it a falsehood. And, therefore, if the *Quakers* should make a large collection of texts of scripture, and insist that those texts, when *justly explained* and *rightly understood*, do contain in them the above

*proposition* ; this would be exceedingly *vain* and *trifling*. For as the point in controversy is not, whether that proposition be contained in scripture, but only, whether it be *true*, or *false* ; so, if what they insist on were granted, it would not serve their purpose ; because a *thousand* texts of scripture cannot possibly make a *false proposition true* ; which is the present case. And all that would follow from hence would be, that the *Bible* is *not* the rule of truth, nor the word of God, because, in such a case, it would be *destitute* of *one* of those qualifications, which are absolutely and essentially necessary, to render it capable of being so ; than which, I think, nothing can be more *injurious* to it. But this is not to be admitted ; for as the *Quakers*, by making their *appeal* to the *Bible*, in the present controversy, do suppose and allow it to be the rule of truth, and the word of God ; so, I think, this is virtually allowing that the *Bible* has *all* those qualifications which are absolutely and essentially necessary, to render it capable of being such a rule. The unavoidable consequence of which is, that the above proposition is *not*, or *cannot* possibly be contained therein. I shall pursue this argument no farther ; because, I think, the case is as plain, as that the whole is equal to all its parts, or as any other self-evident proposition ; and because if what I have here offered is not sufficient for the *Quakers* conviction, then, I think, nothing can be offered which will be sufficient for that purpose ; for if men will not be determined by those *common principles* which are the *grounds* of certainty, in all cases where natural or moral certainty is *attainable*, then, they are not to be *argued* with, because they *disregard* those principles, which  
are

are the foundation of argument, in all cases. I come now,

*Thirdly and lastly*, To make some short reflections upon the whole. And, *first*, I observe what great influence *education*, *vulgar opinion*, and the like, have upon the minds of men; and what *bias* they are to their *conviction*, insomuch that, where the judgment is *biased* by these, there the most clear and convincing evidence proves unsuccessful. Thus, the *Papists* go on, one generation after another, to believe the doctrine of *transubstantiation*, tho', in every instance in which it is pretended that bread is changed into flesh, they *see*, and *feel*, and *taste* that it is still bread; and so they believe, in opposition to the most clear and certain evidence from *experience* to the contrary. Thus likewise the *Calvinist* persists in the belief of the doctrine of *absolute election* and *reprobation*, in opposition to the most convincing evidence of *reason*; and thus the *Quakers* go on in believing that *the natural man cannot do good, regarding spiritual things, without a supernatural influence*, in opposition to such evidence as is equal to mathematical demonstration, arising from *reason* and *experience*. Also if it be asked, what should be done for such men, whose judgments are *biased* and *misled*, as aforesaid? The answer is, that such arguments and reasonings, as are proper for their conviction, ought to be *proposed* to them, that if haply they may, some time or other, examine things with *freedom* and *impartiality*, and be wrought upon thereby. But if they should continue under the *power* of their prejudices, then, it remains, that he, that is a *Papist*, will be a *Papist still*; he, that is a *Calvinist*, will be a *Calvinist still*; and he, that is a *Quaker*, will be a *Quaker still*. Again,

*Secondly*,



Secondly, I observe that as the *Bible* is made a common parent to manifold errors, as in the instances above; so mens understandings are put upon the rack, in order to reconcile the *Bible* to itself, and to make it speak in one place what they presume is spoken in another. Whereas if men would but consider, that as the *Bible* is allowed to be the rule of truth, and the word of God, so it must of necessity have all those qualifications which are absolutely and essentially necessary, to render it capable of being such a rule, the consequence of which would be the barring of a variety of errors; then, the doctrines of *transubstantiation*, of *absolute election* and *reprobation*, and of *man's natural inability to do what is morally good, without a supernatural influence*, would cease to be in the christian world; because it would be allowed, that no such doctrines can possibly take place in the christian revelation. Again,

Thirdly and lastly, I observe, that as the *Bible* is very often used to patronize mens errors, so sometimes the *Spirit of God* is made subservient to the same purpose. When men are agitated by warm and heated imaginations, then, they are too apt to think of themselves, and to persuade others to think of them, that they are under a divine impulse, and that what they preach is the effect and produce of the *Spirit of God* in them. And, thus, men of different parties have father'd different and contrary principles upon the same Spirit. And as men are liable to be thus deluded; so, I think, this is a just ground to be exceeding cautious how we admit such a thought, with respect to ourselves, and how we submit to what is put upon us by others, as such. Certainly, this is a case in which we ought to have the justest and most rational satisfaction, that we are not mistaken;

taken; because it not only affects ourselves, but our *Creator* also. For if we *err* in this particular, as has certainly been the case in a multitude of instances, then, we make *God* the *parent* of what ought not to be father'd upon him. It is not enough to say that the *Apostles* of *Christ* were under a divine impulse, in their *preaching* the *gospel* to the world; for supposing that to be the case, yet, it will not follow that every man is under the like impulse, in his *preaching* and *ministring*, who pretends to be so. Besides, *St. Paul* informs us, that he preached the *gospel*, by the *demonstration* of the *Spirit* and of *power*; that is, the *Spirit* and power of *God*, in working of *miracles*, attended his ministry, to awaken the *attention*, and to work the *conviction* of his hearers. But this is not the case now; and, therefore, nothing can be argued from one case to the other.

To conclude, give me leave to observe, that man is endowed with a faculty of *understanding*, which was given him on purpose, to *direct* and *guide* him in all his affairs; and tho' he is *liable* to fall into a great many *errors*, and is capable of receiving information from other agents, in order to rectify those errors, and thereby to have his mind furnished with such truths, as otherwise he would or might be ignorant of; yet, in these cases, it is his *own* understanding which is his *proper guide*. And, therefore, if *God* should, at any time, impress upon our minds any *useful truths*, this is only *applying* to, and calling the human understanding into *exercise*. In which case, man is not dealt with as a *machine*, but as a *moral agent*: *God* does not *over-rule* or *supersede* the use of the understanding, but only *applies* and *appeals* to it. And, therefore, *divine impressions* are not to be consider'd as a *principle* or *agent*, which acts in every

every man, but only as a *divine* application made to the *understandings* of men, like as one man by speech, writing, or otherwise, *applies* to the understanding of another, tho' in a different way ; the human understanding being naturally qualified to take it in the *ideas* it receives, and to form the *judgment* it makes, antecedent to such application. So that the *light* of *nature* or *reason*, and the *light* of *Christ*, are not *two* distinct and different *principles* of *discernment* in men, the one dim, and the other clear, as some chuse to express it, the latter being only an *address* or *application* to the former ; the *Spirit* of *Christ* only *raising* or *making present* to mens minds some ideas, which otherwise they might not have. For tho' our ideas of things are either *recalled* or *raised* in our minds by *reflection*, by the wandering of the *imagination*, by our *senses* being struck by objects from without by *divine revelation* or *divine impressions*, by *conversing* with others, and the like ; yet these are not so many distinct *principles* of *discernment* in men, but only so many *different ways* in which the understanding is called into exercise, and by which we come at truth. And tho' God may sometimes interpose, and impress useful truths upon the minds of men, yet seeing we have no *certain* and *infallible rule* of judging, when he does so ; therefore, I think, we ought not, in *any instance*, to determine that the ideas, which are present to the mind, are the produce of a *divine impulse*. For if this be admitted in *one instance*, then, it may in another, and so on ; which opens a door to all *enthusiasm*. And whoever pretends that they are in any particular instances, whether in their preaching, or otherwise, under a *divine impulse*, if the subject impressed upon the mind be what *markind are interested in*, then, I think, such men ought, in  
*justice,*

*justice*, to shew the grounds upon which they form such a judgment, and to make it *plain* to the understandings of men, that this is the *truth* of the case.

If they should say, tho' this is a point which is most *evident* and *certain*, yet it is what is only to be *felt* or *experienced* in themselves, and not to be explained to others. I answer; if a man is *certain* that he is under a *divine impression*, then, surely, it must be in his power to shew what is the *ground* of that certainty; whether it be the *force* and *strength* of the impression, or the *pleasure* and *satisfaction* arising from it, or *whatever* it be; if he is convinced upon *rational evidence*; then, I presume, our language is not so barren, but he may find words to convey his ideas by. And when men talk of experiencing grounds of certainty in themselves, which they cannot explain; this is drawing the curtain, and taking sanctuary in *darkness*. By this they effectually prevent all others from examining the point, and discovering the *delusion*, if that should be the case; and likewise by this they bar up the way of *argument* and *conviction* from themselves. And whatever certainty men may pretend to, in such a case; yet, I think, there is *just ground* for suspicion, that it is bare *presumption*; and that it is but very *doubtful*, whether their conviction be any other than the produce of enthusiasm. I shall add no more at present, but that

I am, S I R,

Your obliged humble

Servant, &c.

TRACT



# T R A C T XXVII.

## *Reflections on Natural Liberty.*

### W H E R E I N

The Case of *Liberty*, and *Necessity*, when considered, as a proper Foundation for *Virtue* and *Religion*, for *Rewards* and *Punishments*, is examined. Occasioned by Dr. *Morgan's* Tract, entitled, *A Defence of Natural and Revealed Religion*. In a fifth Letter to a Friend.

S I R,

I Should not have given you any farther trouble, on the subject of my former letters, were it not that, since my last, a scheme of *fatality* has been advanced, in favour of Mr. *Barclay's Principles*; which scheme is considered, as the foundation of *virtue* and *religion*, of *rewards* and *punishments*. This gives me an occasion of sending you a *fifth* letter, in order to examine the forementioned scheme, as to the particulars here referred to. And, accordingly, I observe, that, in my *Examination of Mr. Barclay's Principles*, I shewed what, I apprehend, constitutes an *agent*, viz. “ *intelligence* “ and *activity*. By *intelligence* I mean a capacity of thinking or taking in ideas, the subject “ of such ideas being *motives* or *excitements* to “ *action*,

“ action, or to be at rest, with regard to all such  
 “ beings in whom the power of acting resides.  
 “ And by activity I mean a capacity or power of  
 “ *beginning* or *performing* motion or action, or of  
 “ being at rest, in consequence of those ideas that  
 “ take place in the understanding, and which are  
 “ the ground or reason of such motion or action, or  
 “ of the suspending the exercise of that power.  
 “ ——— And, in order to constitute a *moral agent*,  
 “ it is not only necessary that the being should  
 “ be intelligent, in the lower and less proper  
 “ sense of the word intelligent, as before de-  
 “ scribed ; but it is also necessary that it should  
 “ be so, in the higher and more proper sense of that  
 “ term. That is, that it should be capable of see-  
 “ ing things in a *moral view*, and thereby of *judging*  
 “ of the moral fitness or unfitness of actions ; and  
 “ likewise that it should have power to *act*, or  
 “ to *refrain* from acting, as it pleases.”

Here my reader will see, that as I have distin-  
 guished betwixt *moral agency* and *mere agency*, or  
 agency considered simply as such ; so I have  
 made, not, as it is said \* of me, intelligence and  
 unintelligence, but a *different* capacity of discern-  
 ment in each subject, the *ground* of that distinction.  
 With me, *intelligence* is necessary to mere agency,  
 and to moral agency such intelligence is necessary  
 as renders the agent capable of seeing things in a  
*moral view*, and thereby of discerning and judg-  
 ing of the moral fitness or unfitness of actions.  
 And tho’ mere agency and moral agency may  
 fitly be distinguished into *brutality* and *moral agency*,  
 because, I think, one is the case of brutes, and  
 the other of men ; yet they may not be fitly dis-  
 tinguished into *natural liberty* and *moral agency*,

\* In Dr. Morgan’s Defence of Natural and Revealed Religion.

because,

because, I think, moral agency is as *natural*, and as *free*, as mere agency itself. And,

As I have here considered intelligence, as necessary to agency ; so I have considered *activity*, as necessary also. By activity I mean such a power of *self-motion*, as enables the subject, in which it resides, to *chuse* to move, or to be at rest, in contradistinction to such motion, or rest, as is the result of *external force*, or of *necessity*. By external force, I mean such force as is the result of some *foreign agency* or moving power, independent of any agency or moving power in the subject moved, or at rest. And by necessity I mean the *natural* and *necessary* result of any constitution of things, independent of the free \* election or choice of the subject moved, or at rest. As thus; supposing *gravitation* were necessarily an inherent property of matter, so that, when a stone is moved up into the air by external force, when that force ceases, the stone will, from a principle *necessarily* inherent in itself, and independent of any foreign agency or moving power, move down to the earth again. I say, supposing this to be the case, *such motion*, in my opinion, would not be

\* *Note*, By *free election* or *choice* I mean, that as there is in man a *principle of motion*, which, upon some occasions, is exerted ; so that *exertion*, or the *suspending* the exercise of that moving power, is not the *natural* and *necessary* result of the human constitution ; but it results from the *will* of man, who is at *liberty* to act, or not to act, under the same circumstances. And when a man wills to act, or not to act, and is at *liberty* to *will* either ; then, he is said to *elect* or *chuse* to act, or not to act, in opposition to each of their contraries. And as something or other will be the *ground* or *reason* of choice ; so when a man *chuses*, upon any reason which is present to his mind, he being at *liberty* to *chuse* as he does, or to *chuse* otherways, consonant to any other reason which invites him to the contrary ; then, his election or choice is said to be *free* ; and this is what I mean by a free election or choice, throughout these reflections.

*action,*

*action*, such a *principle* of motion would not be *agency*, neither would the *subject*, in which such a principle resided, be an *agent*. And if we consider *intelligence*, as a necessary part of any constitution of things, and necessary not only to the *production*, but to the *direction* and *regulation* of motion, the case is still the same; for as motion, or rest, in such a case, is the *natural* and *necessary* result of such a constitution, independent of the will or free choice of the subject moved, or at rest; so *such motion* would not be *action*, such a *principle* of motion would not be *agency*, and the *subject*, in which such a principle resided, would not be an *agent*. As thus, Supposing *man*, with every other creature capable of pleasure and pain, were, from his constitution, naturally, necessarily, and unavoidably led to pursue what appeared to him his greatest self-good, and, consequently, to the performing such motions as constitute that pursuit; and supposing such motions were in their directions, and regulations, necessarily conformable to the impressions made upon the understanding, with respect to the greatest self-good, and the way to attain it? Yet as all such motions, together with their directions, and regulations, are the *natural* and *necessary* result of the human constitution, independent of any free choice or election in man; so *such motion* would not be *action*, the *principle* from which it flowed would not be *agency*, and *man*, in such a case, would not be an *agent*; at least, those terms would not be rightly applied, in my estimation. However, whether they would, or not, I shall not here enquire. For as it is a dispute about the propriety of words; so I will leave that dispute to those who are better judges, what ideas common usage has affixed to them. And, therefore, admitting the use of those terms, *four* things seem proper to



be enquired into ; *viz.* *first*, whether any subject under such a constitution of things, as is now under consideration ; that is, any being whose motion, or rest, is not the produce of free choice or election, but results naturally, necessarily, and unavoidably from the constitution of that being, or from the nature and constitution of things in general, be in a state of *liberty*. *Secondly*, whether such a constitution is a proper foundation for *virtue* and *religion*, for *rewards* and *punishments*. *Thirdly*, whether it *comports* with Mr. Barclay's *Principles*, and is a *proper defence* of them. *Fourthly* and *lastly*, whether it is the *truth* of the case.

*First*, I am to enquire, whether any subject, under such a constitution of things, is in a state of *liberty*. And here, I think, the idea, which the word *liberty* serves to convey, is a power of *self-motion*, and *freedom* to exert or suspend the exercise of that power, as that it is a matter of free choice or election to the subject, in which it resides, whether it shall be exerted, or not. So that liberty, in the present case, supposes *intelligence*, to direct the principle of self-motion in the subject, in which it resides. And, therefore, the question is not, whether a *stone* is free ? because a stone being destitute of intelligence, supposing it to have gravitation, as a necessary principle of motion inherent in itself, which would be exerted under some circumstances, there is no place for that question. But, intelligence being a part of the human constitution, it becomes a question, whether man is free, or not. Again, liberty, in the present case, does not stand opposed to *want* of power, or to a *restraint* of power by external force ; and, therefore, the question is not, whether an intelligent creature is at liberty to *fly*, which has no wings ? or whether a prisoner is at liberty to *walk farther* than his chain will admit ?

but

but it stands opposed to such *restraint*, as arises from *necessity*. That is, such restraint as results *necessarily* from the constitution of the subject, thus restrained, whether such restraint results *ultimately* from the nature and constitution of things in general, or from the will or free choice of a supreme governor. This, I think, is a fair representation of what is commonly understood by the term *liberty*, in the present case. So that any intelligent being whose motion, or rest, or who is the cause of motion to any other being; if such motion, or rest, or the cause of such motion is not the produce of *free choice* or *election*, but is the natural and necessary result of the constitution of that being, or of the nature and constitution of things, in general, such a being, or a being under such a constitution of things, is not in a state of *liberty*; but is in a state which, I think, is commonly expressed by the term *fatality*. And, therefore, if *man* is, from his constitution, naturally, necessarily, and unavoidably led to pursue what appears to him his greatest self-good, and, consequently, to the performing such motions as constitute that pursuit, independent of any free choice or election in himself, then, he is not in a state of *liberty*, he is not a *free creature*.

If it should be said, that tho' man is naturally, necessarily, and unavoidably led to pursue what appears to him his greatest self-good, yet, notwithstanding, he is a free being; because he is at *liberty* to *restrain* himself from that pursuit, and to *examine* whether what appears to him to be his greatest self-good be, in reality so or not.

I answer, if the appearance of the greatest self-good has such a *necessary* effect upon the active faculty, as that a man must unavoidably pursue what appears him to be so, independent of any free choice or election in himself; then, he is

not at liberty to examine that appearance; because, by such necessity, the *door* or *way* to examination is *barred* up. And, on the other side, if he is at *liberty* to *examine* whether what appears to him to be his greatest self-good be, in reality, so, or not; then, that appearance has no such *necessary* effect upon the active faculty, as is here supposed; these being propositions which *destroy* one another. But if *examination* could come into this scheme, it would not help the case; because examination would be as *necessary*, and as *unavoidable*, as the actions would be, which would follow upon it. For as there must be the *appearance* of a probability of error, or the intervention of *some motive*, to be a *foundation* for such examination; so where that probability appears, or such motive intervenes, man, under such a constitution of things, must *necessarily* and *unavoidably* examine whether what appears to be his greatest self-good be, in reality, so, or not. And, consequently, he is not, in *any respect*, a free being. And this leads me,

*Secondly*, To enquire, whether such a constitution of things is a *proper foundation* for virtue and religion, for rewards and punishments. *Virtue* is sometimes considered in a *larger*, and sometimes in a more *restrained* sense. In a larger sense, it includes all such actions as are in themselves *right* and *fit*, and thereby render the agent, in the performance of them, the proper object of the *approbation* of every other intelligent being, who is qualified to *discern* the fitness of those actions and the unfitness of their contraries. And, in a restrained sense, it includes only such as are acts of *kindness* and *benevolence* unto others; and thereby render the agent, in the performance of them, not only worthy of approbation, but also of the kindness and benevolence of every other intelligent being,



being, who is qualified to discern the valuableness of those actions and the baseness of their contraries. Now, the question arising from hence is, whether such a constitution of things, as I have now under consideration, is a *proper foundation for virtue*, whether it be considered in a larger, or in a more restrained sense? and, I think, it is most evident that it is not. For as, in the present case, every man must necessarily see things in that view, in which they are represented to his understanding, which representation is independent of his free election or choice; and as he must necessarily act conformable to such appearances, it being no more in his power to see things otherwise, than as they are represented to him, nor to act otherwise than consonant thereto; than it is in the power of a clock to *stop* or *vary* its motions, at pleasure; so the consequence is clear that there is nothing *approvable* or *disapprovable*, in a moral sense, in such a spring or principle of action. For whatever *good*, or *evil*, such actions may be subservient to, as they are the produce, not of free choice or election, but of *necessity*; so there cannot possibly be any thing *morally* good, or evil, in *man* the agent, or rather the instrument of performance. A man may be *well* or *ill constituted*, and the produce of his constitution may be good, or evil, in a natural sense, accordingly. But as his constitution, and his actions consequent upon it, are not owing to himself; so the good, or evil, of either, cannot, with any colour of reason, be placed to his account. For example, suppose one man to be so constituted, as that it appears to him that the way to his greater self-good is in *promoting* the good of the publick; and another is so constituted, as that it appears to him that the way to his greater self-good is in the *destruction* of the commonwealth; and each of these necessarily and



unavoidably act, accordingly. Now, seeing it is not what things are in themselves, but what they appear to be, which necessarily *moves* and *directs* the principle of motion in each; and seeing those different appearances are the different result of their *different constitution*, and of such concurring circumstances, as it was not in the power of either, to introduce, to remove, to alter, or change; and seeing the actions, which follow, are *necessarily* conformable to those appearances; and seeing the appearance of the greater self-good is necessarily the spring or principle of action in both; therefore, neither of them are the proper object of *approbation*, or *dislike*, in any other sense than as a *watch* or a *clock* may be the proper object of either; and, consequently, *man*, in such a state, is not capable of being either *virtuous*, or *vicious*. Whereas, on the other side, if man is a *free creature*; that is, if he has power, and is at liberty to do either good, or evil, and either of these are the produce not of necessity, but of a free choice or election; then, he is capable of rendering himself approveable or disapproveable to every other intelligent being; and, consequently, to be either virtuous, or vicious. Again,

By *religion*, I mean that which is a proper ground of *acceptance* to Almighty God; so that all those actions may be said to be religious, which render the agent *pleasing* and *acceptable* in the eyes of his Maker. And the question here is, whether the aforesaid constitution of things is a *proper foundation* for religion? and, I think, the answer is evident, that it is not. For whatever good, or evil, a good or a bad constitution, together with those concurring circumstances which attend it, may be subservient to; yet as such good, or evil, is not owing to *man*, but to the *author* of his constitution; therefore, it ought  
not,

not, in reason, to be placed to man's account, nor cannot, in reason, render him *pleasing* or *displeasing* to his Maker. God may have reason to be pleased or displeased with *himself*, if I may so speak, for making a good or a bad constitution, and for causing all that good, or evil, which such a constitution necessarily produced, supposing him to be *free* and *voluntary* in such productions; but he cannot, in reason, be pleased or displeased with *man*, seeing it is not in man's power to be otherwise than he is, or to *do* otherwise than he does; and, therefore, this scheme of *fatality* cannot be a proper foundation for *religion*. Whereas, on the side, if good and evil be the produce, not of necessity, but of *free choice* or *election* in man, and he is at *liberty* to do either; then, he is capable of rendering himself either *lovely* or *vile*, either *pleasing* or *displeasing* to his Maker; and, consequently, of being either *religious*, or *irreligious*. Again,

By *rewards* and *punishments*, I mean such *favours* and such *afflictions* as are laid upon a creature, upon account of some *good* or *bad action* which that creature has done, which good or bad action is the *ground* or *reason* of those favours or afflictions being laid upon him. All favours do not come under the denomination of rewards, nor all afflictions under the denomination of punishments; but only such favours and such afflictions as have some precedent good or evil action, or which is judged to be so, as the ground or reason of them. And tho' some favours are considered as *introductory* to other and greater favours; and some afflictions as *preventions* of other and greater evils; yet they are not considered, as rewards and punishments, except there be some precedent *good* or *evil* action, as the ground and reason of their distribution. Thus, when a man's house is pulled down, to save the burning of the town; or when

some men are singled out to hazard or lose their lives, for the preservation of the common-wealth ; these are not considered, as punishments. For tho' the loss of an house to one, and the loss of life to another, be *real afflictions* ; and tho' those are necessary to, and do prevent much greater ; yet they are not considered, as punishments, in either case ; and the reason is evident, because the idea, which the word *punishment* serves to convey, supposes some *precedent evil* action, as the ground or reason of those afflictions which are called by that name, which is not the case before us. And therefore, tho' the word *punishment*, when used in a *loose* or *improper* sense, is sometimes applied to any affliction ; yet, when it is taken strictly and properly, it is expressive only of such afflictions, as have some precedent evil actions, as the ground or reason of them. The case is the same, with respect to *reward* ; for when the term is taken, strictly and properly, it is expressive only of such favours, as have some precedent good actions, which are the ground or reason of their distribution. And,

Tho' rewards and punishments may be *medicinal* ; that is, tho' the rewarding a person, for performing a good action, may become an *excitement* to the actor, and to others to perform the like *good actions*, in hope of obtaining the like *reward* ; and tho' the punishing a person, for doing an evil action, may become a means to *restrain* the actor, and others from doing the like *evil actions*, to prevent their falling under the like *correction* ; yet these are rather the *consequences* of, than the *ground* and *foundation* of rewards and punishments. Rewards and punishments have their reason in what is *past*, and not in what is to come. It is the *valuableness* of a *past action*, which renders one man *worthy* of reward ; and it is the *vileness* of a *past action*, which renders another man

worthy

worthy and deserving of punishment. And as *repentment* and *gratitude* are the springs of action, in the present case; so they are both excited by what is *past*, and not by any thing which is to come. It is *mens bad actions*, which raise in us the passion of *repentment*; and it is *mens good actions* which excite in us the affection of *gratitude*. And as these are made parts of the *human constitution*, by the great Author of our being; so, I think, they are equally founded in *reason*, whilst under the direction and government of it. That is, whilst directed to their *proper objects*, and kept within the *bounds of reason*. And supposing the only reason for rewards and punishments, in a *civil society*, were to excite men to perform good actions, and to restrain them from doing what is evil, without any regard to the *personal merit or demerit* of the actor; yet that alters not the case here, because it is not, what is the ground and foundation of rewards and punishments, in point of *policy*, but what is such, in point of *reason* and *morality*, which is the subject of our present enquiry. Tho' I think, punishments, in *civil society*, are not to be considered *barely* as medicinal, but also as acts of *publick repentment*, in which the suffering person is afflicted *for*, or *because* he is injurious and hurtful to society; as well as to prevent the like evils, for time to come. For as it is evident, that *laws* with their *sanctions*, *viz.* the threatenings and promises annexed to them, *look forward* and have their reason in what is *to come*, *namely*, to direct the future behaviour and actions of men; so it is alike evident, that the *execution* of those sanctions, in rewarding and punishing, *looks backward* and hath its reason in what is *past*; *namely*, one man is rewarded *for*, or *because* he has *kept*, and another man is punished *for*, or *because* he has *transgressed the law*. And tho' rewards and punishments may have



have an *influence* upon mens *future* behaviour ; yet that is, as I have observed above, rather a *consequence* of, than the *reason* of them ; it being mens past actions which are the *ground* and *reason* of their distribution. And, thus, the *scriptures* represent mens good and bad actions, as the *reason* and *rule* of *action* to God, in the distribution of rewards and punishments, at the *general judgment*. God will then render to every man, not according to the good, or evil, which his favours and corrections shall be the occasion of *introducing*, or *preventing* ; but according as every man's works *have been*, whether good, or evil. That is, God will then dispense his favours and his corrections, according as mens *past behaviour* has rendered them *worthy* and *deserving* of either. This being, I think, the true state of the case, the question is, whether such a constitution of things, as is now under consideration, is a *proper foundation* for rewards and punishments ? and the answer, I think, is, that it is not. For as the actions of men, whether they are subservient to good, or evil, are not the produce of a free choice or election, but spring from a *necessity* of *nature*, so that, taking all circumstances into the case, a man cannot possibly do otherwise than he does, he cannot, in reason, be the *object* of reward, or punishment, on their account. Whereas, if action in man, whether good, or evil, is the produce of *will* or *free choice*; so that a man, in either case, had it in his power, and was at liberty to have chose and done the *contrary*, he is the proper *object* of reward, or punishment, according as he chuses to behave himself. Upon the whole, I think, it appears, that the forementioned constitution of things is not a *proper foundation* for *virtue* and *religion*, for *rewards* and *punishments*. I proceed,

*Thirdly,*

Thirdly, To enquire, whether such a constitution of things comports with Mr. Barclay's Principles, and is a proper defence of them? And here I shall only consider his scheme, with respect to the fall of man by Adam's sin, and of man's recovery by grace. And, accordingly, I observe, that man, by Adam's transgression, according to Mr. Barclay, lost his disposition, and therewith his ability to do good, and he contracted a disposition, or he became thereby so subjected to the seed of the serpent, as that he is necessarily and unavoidably determined to do evil, and his loss is, by grace, so far repaired, that he can, by the help of a divine and supernatural power, do good, and avoid doing evil; yet so, as that this grace does not work irresistibly in him, that is, it does not force him to do the one, or avoid doing the other; but leaves him at liberty to co-operate with, or resist the work or operation of grace in him. This, if I understand Mr. Barclay aright, is his scheme of the fall, and of the recovery of man. And the question, here, is not, whether it is the truth of the case, but only, whether it suits with such a constitution of things, as is now under consideration? and the answer, I think, is evident, that it does not. For, in that view of the case, man, as he is a creature capable of pleasure and pain, is, at all times, necessarily and unavoidably led to pursue what appears to him his greater self-good, this being an unalterable part of his constitution; so that all the good, or evil, that he does in the world, is in consequence of this pursuit, and is the natural and necessary result of it. And, therefore, whatsoever bad effect the sin of Adam might have upon man's understanding, as to his discerning what is his greater self-good, or the way to attain it, that could not make any alteration in him, with respect to his disposition, and thereby his ability to do good,

or evil, in a *moral* sense; seeing his disposition and ability, in these respects, is, and must be always the same, the appearance of the greater self-good necessarily governing his dispositions and actions; at all times, in every condition, and under every circumstance which he can possibly fall into. And, consequently, man has not passed through such a *change*, nor suffered such a *loss* by *Adam's* sin, as *Mr. Barclay's* scheme supposes.

If it should be said, that tho' man's disposition, and thereby his ability to do good, or evil, is the same since, as it was before the fall, he being necessarily governed in those respects, at all times, by one and the same principle or spring of action, *viz.* the appearance of the greater self-good; yet his *understanding* became so *blinded* by *Adam's* mis-carriage, that he cannot, without a divine light, *discern* what is his greater self-good, nor the way to attain it; and that the work of grace consists in *enlightening* mens minds, in these respects; so that now, by the help of *illuminating* grace, it is in a man's power to do either good, or evil. That is to say, if man *follows* this divine light, he will do good; if he *neglects* it, he will do evil; it being a matter of *choice* to him to do either.

I *answer*, if this were the case, man in the fall, without divine grace, would be in a *deplorable* and *pitiable*, but he could not possibly be in a *sinful* state; he would have a *darkened* understanding, but he could not have a *sinful* nature; or a *natural inclination* to sin. For as man is, from his constitution, naturally and unavoidably led to pursue what appears to him his greater self-good, and, consequently, to perform such motions as constitute that pursuit; and as the blindness of his understanding is not owing to himself; so his desires and his consequent actions cannot, in reason, be considered as *criminal*. And as to the  
darkness

darkness upon man's understanding, with respect to his discernment of the greater self-good, and the way to attain it; that must have been the case of *Adam before the fall*, or else he could not have *miscarried*. The prospect of *pleasure* in eating the forbidden fruit, or whatever was the *motive* to action, in that case, must *appear* to *Adam* to be his *greater self-good*, or the way to attain it, or else he could not have *eat* it; and if it, thus, appeared, then, he could not possibly have done otherwise. So that his *fall* was necessarily the result of the *darkness* and *blindness* of his understanding, and that was the necessary result of his *constitution*, even in his most *primitive* state; which, surely, does not *suit* with Mr. Barclay's *Principles*. And if we consider the work of grace, as consisting in enlightening mens minds, with respect to their greater self-good, and the way to attain it, this will not *comport* with Mr. Barclay's *scheme*; because, when men are thus enlightened, *suitable* action must *necessarily* and *unavoidably* follow; seeing action, upon the present supposition, is the necessary result of the *impressions* made upon the *understanding*. And, therefore, supposing all men, without divine grace, are *invincibly ignorant*, in these respects, and supposing illuminating grace is afforded unto *all*; then, it will unavoidably follow that no man can possibly *miscarry*. For, in this view of the case, grace works *irresistibly*, and men cannot receive it in *vain*; where *light* interposes, *suitable* action must, and will necessarily, and unavoidably follow, which overthrows Mr. Barclay's *scheme*. Thus, I think, it appears, that the constitution of things, I have now under consideration, does, by no means, *comport* with Mr. Barclay's *Principles*, and, therefore, it cannot be a *proper defence* of them. And it is still my opinion, that those principles are *indefensible*; at least, they  
are



are so, for any thing that the *advocates* of Mr. Barclay's scheme have shewn to the contrary. As to that *shift* which Mr. Beaven is, at last, driven to, in the *defence* of those principles, viz. his distinguishing betwixt faculties *asleep*, and faculties *awake* ; I observe, that tho' mens carelessness and negligence, in not reflecting upon and considering the nature and consequences of their actions, in an affair of the utmost concern to themselves, may, by a *figure* of speech, be called *sleep* ; because they are as *regardless* of their highest interest, as men are, when really asleep ; yet, in this case, their faculties are so far from being properly *asleep*, that, on the contrary, they are *awake*, by being in use and exercise ; tho' employed, perhaps, to a bad purpose, and they are guilty of the highest folly and madness, in the *use* and *abuse* of them. For as those faculties are parts of the human constitution ; so man, without a supernatural influence, has *power*, and is at *liberty* to neglect them, to use them aright, or to abuse them, as he pleases ; and is answerable to God for his behaviour, accordingly ; and this renders his conduct justly *approveable*, or *condemnable*, which otherwise it could not be either. I now proceed,

*Fourthly and lastly*, To enquire, whether the forementioned constitution of things is the *truth* of the case ? That is, whether man, as he is a creature capable of pleasure and pain, is, from his constitution, *naturally* and *necessarily* led to pursue what *appears* to him his *greatest self-good*, and, consequently, to the performing such motions as constitute that pursuit ? and, I think, upon enquiry, it will appear, that this is not the case ? I shall not here examine, what are the several springs or excitements to action in man, but only make *one* or *two* observations which, I think,

think, frequent experience will support, *viz. first*, men, in many instances, pursue pleasure, without entering into the question, whether what they pursue be, in the enjoyment, their greater self-good, or not? And tho' in these cases, *pleasure* is the *motive* to action, yet it is only considered as *present* pleasure, and not as the greater self-good, for if that were taken into the case, and to be made the reason of action, men would, in many instances, *deny* themselves those pleasures they pursue; which shews, that the greater self-good is not the *sole principle* of action in man. Again, *secondly*, where *two* goods come in *competition*, a present and a future, a less and a greater, which are known and judged to be so, men, in some instances, chuse a *greater future* good, and *refuse* a less that is present; and, in other instances, they chuse a *less present* good, and *refuse* a greater that is future. Thus, a man who is satisfied there will be a *future state* of happiness and misery after death, one or other of which states every man must be a sharer in, according as he now behaves himself; and he is likewise satisfied, upon the most just and rational grounds, as he thinks, that all the *pleasure* and *pain*, he is capable of enjoying or suffering at present, bears *no proportion* to the pleasure and pain he must enjoy or suffer hereafter; and, consequently, that his greater self-good is not any thing which he can enjoy in this world, when it comes in competition with the enjoyment of another. Thus he *judges*, and thus he *must* judge, it being no more in his power to judge otherwise, whilst the *evidence* of a future state appears clear to him, than it is for him to judge that *two* and *two* make *six*. And yet, notwithstanding all this, he does, in many instances, hazard his *greater future good*, for the sake of a *less* that is present; which shews that the appearance

ance of the greater self-good is not a *necessary principle* of action in man. And tho' pleasure is the natural object of *desire*, and, therefore, the appearance of pleasure is an *invitation* to enjoyment; yet it is but an invitation, because every man is at liberty to *give* or *deny* himself that pleasure, as he pleases. And tho' *selfishness* may sometimes be the *ground* or *reason* of such self-denial, as when a man denies himself a less present good, for the sake of a greater laid up for him in futurity; yet this is not always the case. Men sometimes deny themselves a present enjoyment, not from a prospect of farther and greater pleasure to themselves, but purely that they may be *subservient* to the good and benefit of others. And tho' such self-denial will naturally introduce pleasure to a *man's self*; yet that pleasure is only the *produce* of, and not the *ground* or *reason* of such benevolent actions. This is what I have already considered \* elsewhere, and, therefore I shall not pursue it farther; it being, I think, manifest, that the appearance of the greater self-good is not a necessary, and thereby the sole principle of action in man.

I will only add, that *liberty* of actions is, I think, the only foundation of *moral government*, in contradistinction to such government as is called *natural*. By *natural government* I mean the *involuntary* and *necessary subjection* of any being or species of beings to a *law*, which the God of nature hath subjected them to. Thus, the *regular* and *necessary* motions of the several *planets*, in the solar system, is considered, as a part of the government of the *natural world*. And if *intelligence* be considered as a *necessary* part of any constitution of things, and if the intelligent subject be *necessarily* subjected to that *law* by which it is governed, this would be

\* See my Discourse on Virtue and Happiness.

but *natural* government, or a part of the government of the *natural* world; because, in such a case, subjection is not *voluntary*, but is as *natural* and *necessary*, as the subjection of any *unintelligent* subject can be. And by *moral* government I understand the giving a *law* or rule of action to intelligent beings, who are qualified to *discern* the *fitness* of their *subjection* to that law, and the *unfitness* of their *refusing* to be governed by it, with *liberty* to act *agreeably* with, or *contrary* thereto. And as their subjection or the contrary is *voluntary*; so they render themselves thereby worthy of the *favour* or *displeasure* of the law giver, which otherwise they would not be either. And, therefore, if the appearance of the greater self-good were a *natural* and *necessary* principle of action in man, and thereby his subjection is not *voluntary*, but he is necessarily subjected to the law by which he is governed; then, he is not the subject of *moral*, but only of *natural* government. And if a *moral law*, or any other *rule* of action, were delivered to such a species of beings, it could not answer the *purposes* of a law to them; because there is another law, to which the whole species are *naturally* and *necessarily* subjected. And tho' a *given law* may, in some instances, seem to be *complied* with; yet submission, in those instances, is *accidental*, as the law happens to *coincide* with that other law, *viz.* the appearance of the greater self-good, to which man is necessarily subjected. And if God, in the government of the world, be *naturally* and *necessarily* subjected to the nature and constitution of things, so that his productions are not the effect of *free choice*, but of *natural necessity*; then, I think, he is a governour of the world, in no other sense than the *spring* of a *watch* is a governour to the rest of the movements in that machine. For tho' one is *intelligent*, and the o-

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ther *unintelligent*; yet as they both are *necessary causes* of what they produce, *government* must be the same, in both cases. The case is the same with respect to any *advantage* or *benefit* we receive. That is, we are as much *obliged* to the *sun*, as we are to *God*, for the light and heat we receive from it; they both being *irvoluntary*, with respect to *those favours*. For as the *sun* cannot avoid diffusing its light and heat; so *God* could not avoid giving it being, placing it were it is, and giving it those useful qualities. Whereas, on the other side, if *God* and men are *free beings*; that is, if *God's* productions are the effect, not of *fate* or *necessity*, but of *free choice* or *election*; and if men are at *liberty* to act conformable to those laws, which *God* hath freely, and thereby kindly, recommended, as a rule of action to them, from such motives as render their choice either justifiable, *approvable*, or *condemnable*; then, *God* is, in reality, a *benefactor* to the intelligent world, and mankind are under a *rational* and *moral* government, which otherwise neither of them would be.

If it should be said, supposing *God* has *power*, and is at *liberty* to do either good, or evil; then, we cannot be *certain*, but he will do the *latter*; yea he may do more evil than good, for any *grounds* we have, from which we may *justly* conclude the contrary. I answer, the *certainty* of *God's* not doing evil does not arise from his being under a *necessity* of doing good, but it arises from hence, *viz.* that there is not any thing in nature, which can possibly afford him an *excitement* or *temptation* to it. And from hence arises a proper ground of certainty, not that *God cannot*, but that *he will not do evil*. *God* can do evil, with respect to any *natural necessity* he is under to the contrary; but we may be assured *he will not*, because we are sure nature does not afford a *motive*, which will be  
to

to him the *ground* or *reason* of such a choice. And tho' nature does not afford an excitement or temptation to God to do evil; yet he is not the less *free* in doing good; because, when he does so, he acts in the *same way*, and his actions spring from the same *principle* or *cause of action*, and he thereby acts with equal *freedom*, in those instances in which there is no excitement to the contrary, as he would do, if there were such excitements; and, in such a case, tho' a *free being can act without a motive*, with respect to any *necessity* he is under to the contrary; yet, I think, it is evident *he will not*, because, I think, there must be some *motive*, to be the ground or reason of his choice. And, thus, we may be sure that tho' every man has the power of his *own life* in his *own hand*; yet no man will lay violent hands upon himself, without some excitement or temptation to it. And tho' *cannot* and *will not*, in this case, are the same, with respect to the *event*; yet they are not the same with respect to the *ground* and *cause of action*. As to those questions, *viz.* whether God does *foreknow* the actions of men? and whether *prescience* and *liberty* are consistent? these I am no way concerned with. Tho', that *man is a free being*, and that *God does foreknow what man will do*, are propositions, which, I think, do not destroy one another.

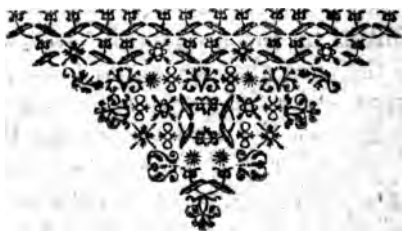
To conclude, I observe, that if *moral government* consisted in the *necessary* subjection of its subjects to the laws that are given them; and if action in man were the *necessary* effect of the *impressions* made upon the understanding; then the *truths*, the *promises* and *threatenings* of the gospel, would have a *different effect* upon the *lives* of those that believe them, than at present they appear to have. Then, the actions of christians would be *exactly conformable* to that *light* which every man

receives from the gospel ; which, surely, every day's experience shews to be wrong. Upon the whole, I observe, That as *liberty* to act, in opposition to necessity, is necessary to render the agent justly *approvable*, or *condemnable*, according to those *motives* which are to him the ground or reason of his choice ; so *liberty* is necessary to the very being of *religion*, whether *natural*, or *revealed*, for, without liberty, there cannot possibly be either. And as not any thing can, in reason, be a *man's duty*, but what comes within the reach of his *agency* ; and as liberty to act, in opposition to necessity, puts it into a man's power to do what ever comes within the reach of that agency : so from hence it will follow that man has power, and is at liberty to do *all* that is his *duty*, or that is *necessary* to render him *acceptable* to his Maker, *without a supernatural influence* ; which is the *point* I have been concerned to make good, and which, I think, is destructive of Mr. *Barclay's* scheme.

*I am, S I R,*

*Your obliged humble*

*Servant, &c.*



TRACT.

# TRACT XXVIII.

## SOME FARTHER

### *Reflections on Natural Liberty;*

#### WHEREIN

Several other Points relating to the Subject are considered.

**B**EFORE I leave this subject, I think it proper to take notice of a few points, which are urged in prejudice of *natural liberty*; viz. *first*, it is supposed clear and evident, from the nature of the thing, that a man is under a *necessity* to chuse what he *does chuse*; or to chuse what, upon the whole, appears to be *best*. The force of the argument, if I understand it aright, is as follows; *namely*, that as it is most clear and evident, from the nature of the thing, that a man must *perceive* things, and *judge* of propositions, whilst they appear in the same light, as he *does* perceive and judge of them, it not being in his power to perceive and judge *otherwise*; so it is alike clear and evident, from the nature of the thing, that a man is under the like *necessity* to will or chuse what he *does chuse*, it not being in his power to will or chuse the *contrary*; the *will* being as *necessarily* determined to chuse what, upon the whole, appears to be best, as the *perception* and *judgment* are *necessarily* determined by those objects which are presented to them,

Upon which I observe, that our perceptions of things are no other than the *images* of those things raised in, or impressed upon our minds; and our judgments of propositions are no other than the



discernment of the relation, or the contrary, which the parts of those propositions stand in to each other, and the like. And, therefore, we cannot possibly perceive or judge otherwise than we do ; because that supposes we can have a perception of things *different* from the images of those things raised in, or impressed, upon our minds, which images, thus impressed, are those very perceptions, and that we can judge of propositions *different* from the relation, or the contrary, which we discern the parts of those propositions to stand in to each other, which discernment is that very judgment ; both which are *absurdities*, and *impossibilities* in nature. But tho' it thus appears evident, from the nature of the thing, that a man cannot possibly perceive or judge otherwise than he does ; yet it does not appear alike evident, that a man is *necessarily confined* to chuse what he does chuse, or to chuse what, upon the whole, appears to be best. And here, if it be admitted that good is the *sole object* of the will, tho', I think this may justly be \* questioned ; yet that does not confine it to the choice of any *particular* good, which may be pre-

\* I think, it does not imply a *contradiction*, if the will be supposed to chuse *evil*, as such. All that can be urged, in the present case, I think, is only this. *viz.* that *nature* does not afford a *motive*, which will be the *ground* or *reason* of such a choice. And, if this be the case, then, it will follow, not that a man *cannot*, but that he *will not* chuse evil, as such. A man, that is at *Hackney*, can walk to *London*, supposing him to have health, and strength, and limbs sufficient to carry him thither ; and yet he *will not*, without some *previous reason*, as the ground of such choice. To this I may add, that, in all *revengeful* actions, evil, as such, tho' not to the agent, yet to another, seems to be the ground or reason of them. For when one man revenges an injury upon another, the *motive* to action, in that case, is not the removing from himself the *pain* and *uneasiness* of mind, which arises from, and attends his resentment, tho' that may be the *effect* of it ; but it is to give pain and misery to another, who has been, as he *thinks*, voluntarily and unreasonably the *cause* of his affliction.

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sented to it. Good admits of a great variety. There are pleasures of *different kinds*, which suit and affect the various parts of our *constitution*; and these offer themselves as *candidates* for our election. The good of *ourselves* and the good of *others*, *present* good and good at a *distance*, offer themselves to, and court our *choice*, when they cannot be chosen and enjoyed together. So that nature is so far from *confining* the will to the choice of any *particular* good, that, on the contrary, it has laid a *foundation*, and made a *provision* for a *liberty* of choice. Every good is *what it is*, or what it *appears to be*, independent of every other good; and, as such, it is the object of our choice tho' *ten thousand other* or *greater* goods come in competition with it; because the perception of *another* or a *greater* good does not change its nature, or render it less the object of our choice after, than before such a perception. Besides, *choice*, I think, supposes liberty. For if we are necessitated to take a thing, let what will be the ground of that necessity, that properly speaking, is not choice: but if we are at liberty to take it, or not, or to take one thing, and not another, when we may, if we please, take either, this expresses the idea to which we annex the term *choice*. And tho' it is *highly reasonable* that a man should always chuse the *greater good*, or that good which upon the whole, is best; yet nature has not laid him under a necessity of doing so, but he may, if he please, chuse otherwise. That is, he may, if he please, chuse a *present pleasure*, in opposition to what is best for himself, upon the whole, and so make a *foolish* choice; or he may chuse what is *best, upon the whole*, and deny himself a present enjoyment, and thereby act the part of a *wise-man*. He may likewise, if he please, chuse what is good *for himself*, in opposition to the good of the publick,

and so make a *vicious* choice; or he may refuse that good, for the sake of the *common-wealth*, and thereby act a *virtuous* and a *generous* part. And tho' our understandings enable us, generally, tho' in some instances they may err, to discern what good is *most worthy* of our choice; yet that discernment does not *necessarily* determine our actions. The understanding has a *two-fold* office, in this case, if I may so speak; *first*, to discover the good, or evil, of those objects that are presented to it, and this is called *perception*; *secondly*, to discern the *difference* betwixt one object and another, with respect to their good, or evil, when they are brought into a comparison, and when the circumstances and consequences, that attend them, are taken into the case, and this is called *judgment*; and when the understanding has thus performed its office, it has not any thing farther to do, with respect to action; this being all that, in the nature of the thing, can possibly be done by it; action being performed by a *self-determining power*, which is as distinct and different from the understanding, as the understanding is distinct and different from those objects which are perceived by it. So that, tho' the will does *depend* upon the *understanding* for its *informations*, yet it is not *confined* by it to the choice of any *particular* good, whether greater, or less; but it is at liberty to chuse what kind of good it pleases, whether it be in the pursuit of objects that strike and affect our *appetites*, or *affections*, or any other part of our *constitution*; and consequently, nature has left it to our *choice* to be either *virtuous*, or *vicious*, to be either *wise-men* or *fools*. And, therefore, tho' the understanding is, by nature, confined to *perceive* and *judge*, as it does, it being impossible that *contrary* images, or *different* discernments of the same thing, should be impressed upon the mind, at the same time; yet it is quite other-

otherwise, with respect to the will, which can have *different goods* presented, at the same time, as the *objects* of its *election*, and nature has left it *free* and at *liberty* for the choice of *any* of them; neither are those cases at all parallel, so as to lay a foundation for arguing from one to the other. Again,

*Secondly, Experience* is urged, in favour of *necessity*; the force of which, I think, is as follows; *namely*, experience is supposed to shew that men do, in *every instance*, chuse, and, consequently, pursue what, upon the whole, appears to be *best*; and from hence arises a high degree of probability, that they are under a necessity to act thus; for if it be admitted that men *can act otherwise*, then, it is highly reasonable to suppose that, in *some instances*, they would do so, whereas experience shews the contrary. This, I think, is the force of the argument, drawn from *experience*. To which I answer, that the evidence, arising from experience, determines not against, but in *favour* of liberty. As thus, supposing a *less present good* comes in competition with a *greater* that is *future*; in this case, I think, every man must judge that the greater future good is, upon the whole, *best*; it being no more in a man's power to judge, that a less present good is, upon the whole, *better* than a greater that is future, than it is in his power to judge that *two* and *two* make *six*. Now, the question arising from hence is, whether men do, in *every instance*, chuse a *greater* future good, in opposition to a less that is present, when these come in competition; and thereby *always* act conformable to their judgments? or whether they do not, in *some instances*, chuse a *less* present good, in opposition to a greater that is future, and thereby act against their judgments? and experience is appealed to, as a *judge* in the case. And, I think, it is so far from being



ing evident from experience, that men do always act conformable to their judgments, in the present case; that, on the contrary, experience shews that they do, in many instances, act against them. That is, they do, in many instances, chuse a *less* present good, in opposition to a greater that is future, when these come in competition. And I must intreat my reader to consult his own experience, and see, whether he does not, in many instances, follow his *appetites*, and the like, in opposition to his *reason*. If it should be said, that, at the time of his choice, he judged it to be *best*. I answer, If he took a view of the case, he could not possibly judge so; and, if he did not take a view of it, then, the motive to action was not the greater good, but only *present pleasure*; and action was the produce, not of judgment, but of *appetite*, or like. And as men do sometimes pursue a present pleasure, without entering into the question, whether it be the greater good, or not? so, in some instances, they chuse a present pleasure, tho' convinced, at the time, that it is no the greater, but the *less* good. Thus, the *drunkard* will gratify his desire of liquor, tho' he is reminded of, and convinced, at the time, that it will bring upon him such a disorder, as is more than an equivalent to the pleasure that arose from that gratification. If it should be said, that men prefer a less present good to a greater that is future, because the present good is *certain*, and the future is *uncertain*. I answer, Men act differently, in this respect, when the *grounds* of certainty on the one side, and of uncertainty, on the other, are *equal*; and, therefore, that cannot be a *necessary* cause of such different actions. Besides, some men who are satisfied, upon the best grounds, as they think, of a *future* state of happiness, and that all present enjoyments fall vastly short of it,  
do,

do, notwithstanding such a *conviction*, sometimes hazard the happiness of another world, for the sake of a short-lived pleasure here. And as men, in such a case, do, as it were, give the lie to themselves, by acting *contrary* to their judgments; so this is a just foundation for that *indignation* and *resentment*, which they take up *against themselves*, for acting so foolish and ridiculous a part; which otherwise there would not be any foundation in *nature* or *reason* for. However, as *experience* is appealed to, in the present case; so there I must leave it. That is, I must leave my reader to consult his *own* experience, whether he does, in every instance, act *conformable* to his judgment, in chusing what, upon the whole, appears to be best? or whether, in *some instances*, he does not follow his appetites, and the like, and thereby act *against* his judgment, in chusing that, which, when all things are taken into the case, he cannot but see is the *less* good? I say, I must leave my reader to consult his own experience; because other mens judgments or experiences may possibly be of less weight with him, with respect to this argument. Again,

*Thirdly*, It is urged, in prejudice of *liberty*, that it is *impossible*. The force of this argument, I think, is as follows, *viz.* man is a *necessary agent*, because all his actions have a *beginning*; for whatever has a beginning must have a *cause*, and every cause is a *necessary* cause. If any thing can have a beginning which has no cause, then, *nothing* can produce *something*; and, if nothing can produce something, then, the *world* might have had a beginning, without a cause, which is not only an *absurdity* commonly charged on *Atheists*, but is a real *absurdity* itself; because, if a cause be not a *necessary cause*, then, it is *no* cause at all; for if causes are not *necessary* causes of the effects they produce,



duce, then, those causes are not *suited* to, or are *indifferent* to these effects, which, in reality, is the same as to be *no* cause at all. Liberty, therefore, or a power to act, or not to act, to do this, or another thing, under the *same* causes, is an *impossibility*, and is *atheistical*. To which I answer, that *action in man* is the *motion* of his body, caused by the *exertion* of the moving principle which resides in him, and is a part of his constitution, as the parts of the body are which are moved by it; and as these are parts of the human constitution, and, as such, are *a man's self*; so such motion is called *self-motion*; and the *cause* of this moving principle in *man* is *God*, who is the Author of his constitution. These are all the *links* that are in this *chain*, viz. *action* is the *motion* of the body, caused by the exertion of the self-moving principle, which resides in man; and the cause of this self-moving principle is *God*. So that here is *not* an effect, without a cause; here is *not* an impossibility; here is *not* an approach to atheism, as the present argument supposes.

If it should be said, that tho' there is in man a *self-moving* principle; yet that principle *will not* be exerted, without the perception of *some motive*, which motive is the *cause* of that exertion; so that here is *one* of the links of this chain *dropped*. I answer, If the moving principle in man is moved, or caused to be exerted, by something *external to man*, which all *motives* are, then, it would not be a *self-moving* principle, seeing it would be moved by a cause *external to itself*; and to say that a self-moving principle is moved, or caused to be exerted, by a cause external to itself, is *absurd* and a *contradiction*; because it supposes the *presence* and *absence*, the *exertion* and *non-exertion* of the same power, in the same subject, at the same time. And if there is not in man a self-moving principle, but only such a principle as is capable of be-  
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ing moved or acted upon by some external cause ; then, *agency* is not in man, but in that external cause, or in its cause, and so on, 'till we come to some subject which has in it a principle of self-motion, that is exerted, *independent* of any external cause. Besides, motives are as much the *cause* of our *not exerting* the self-moving power, in some instances, as they are the *cause* of that *exertion*, in other instances. That is, we are as much moved or caused to *suspend* the exertion of the self-moving power, by the *motive* which is the reason of that suspension, as we are moved or caused to *exert* that power, by the *motive* which is the ground or reason of that exertion ; those motives *operating* or *causing*, if I may so speak, the same way, in both cases. Now, to say, that the non-exertion of the self-moving power is caused by a motive, is the same as to say, that *that motive* is the cause of *nothing* ; the non-exertion of the self-moving power being a *negative*, it, properly speaking, is nothing ; so that a motive, in this case, is the cause of nothing, or, in other words, it is a *cause, without an effect* ; which is as *absurd as an effect, without a cause*. But the truth is, they are not causes, in either case ; tho', in common language, they are often called so. Motives are only the *ground* or *reason*, why we suspend or exert the self-moving power, or why we exert it, in one way, or at one time, rather than in another way, or at another time, but are not causes of either. Motives are merely *passive*, if I may so speak, in the production of action. That is, they have no *causality*, in the production of it. The fine colour of liquor in a glass may be a *reason* to me, to *exert* my self-moving power, in order to taste the pleasure which I may propose to enjoy, in so doing ; but neither the *liquor*, nor its *colour*, nor my *perception* of either, has any *causality* in them to be the cause of



of that exertion. And tho', when the self-moving power is exerted, it becomes a *necessary* cause of its effects ; yet as a man is *free and voluntary*, in the exertion of that power ; that is, he is not under a necessity, from the constitution of things, to exert it, or not to exert it, to exert it this way, or that way, tho' there may be more reason for the one than the other ; so, in that respect, it is said to be a *free cause*, and those *effects* are likewise said to be *free*, which are produced by it. And as motives are not the cause of action, so all, that is necessary to the exertion of a self-moving principle, is not a cause, but an *occasion* of such exertion ; and this is the case of *motives* ; they do not cause, but only give occasion for the exertion of the self-moving power ; they are only *reasons*, why a man does, or does not exert this power, but are not *causes* of either. Seeing, then, that action in man is the motion of his body, caused by the exertion of the self-moving principle, which resides in him ; and the cause of that self-moving principle is God ; and seeing that motives are not the cause, but only the ground or reason of action, and that a reason of action is sufficient to give occasion, for the exertion of the self-moving power, without any external cause ; from hence it will follow, that, in the production of action, there is *not* an effect, without a cause, and that liberty is *not* impossible, nor atheistical. Again.

*Fourthly*, It is urged, in prejudice of liberty, that it is an *imperfection*, in comparison of *necessity*. The force of the argument, I think, is as follows, *namely, first*, If a man is necessarily determined, from the constitution of things, to be *wise, virtuous, and happy*, he will, in that case, be *more securely so*, than if it be left to his free choice to be either of these ; because, in the latter case, he may *miscarry*, but, in the former, he cannot ;  
therefore,

therefore, necessity is a greater *perfection* than liberty. *Secondly*, Liberty impowers men to chuse *evil*, as such, or, at least, to chuse the *less* good, whereas necessity confines mens choice to the *greater* good; and, therefore, it is a *perfection*, in comparison of liberty. *Thirdly*, Liberty subjects men to more *wrong* choices than necessity; because a man, who is determined in his choice by the *appearing nature of things*, never makes a wrong choice, but when he *errs* in his judgment; whereas a being, who is *indifferent* to all objects, and swayed by *no motives*, in his choice of objects, which is the case of *free beings*, chuses, at a *venture*, and only makes a right choice, when it *happens*; and, therefore, necessity is more *perfect* than liberty. *Fourthly*, Liberty destroys the use of our *senses*, our *appetites*, our *passions*, and our *reason*, which are given to direct us in our pursuit of happiness, and to preserve our being; whereas necessity preserves to us the use of these; and, therefore, necessity is a *greater perfection* than liberty. *Fifthly*, Whatever is perfect is *necessarily* so; and whatever depends upon free choice may be *imperfect*, and is, by consequence, imperfect; and, therefore, necessity is *more perfect* than liberty, and, consequently, is the *truth* of the case.

To which I answer, *first*, that if *all men* were wise, virtuous, and happy, then, there might be some foundation for *this branch* of the argument; whereas it is as evident that *folly*, *vice*, and *misery* take place in the world, as it is that *wisdom*, *virtue*, and *happiness* do so. And, if some men are *necessarily* wise, virtuous, and happy, then, others are as *necessarily* foolish, vicious, and miserable. And, admitting, for argument-sake, that men can be necessarily wise, and virtuous, and likewise happy, in consequence of these; yet seeing all men are *not so*, but some are necessarily the *contrary*, therefore,

fore, liberty is more *perfect* than necessity. For tho' those persons who are necessarily wise, and virtuous, and likewise happy, in consequence thereof, are *more surely so*, than if these were left to their free choice, because, in the latter case, there is a *possibility* of their being the *contrary*; yet those who are necessarily foolish, and vicious, and likewise miserable, in consequence of these, are in a very *deplorable* and *pitiable* state, because it is not a matter of *free choice* to them, whether they will *be so, or not*. And, therefore, the *disadvantage* of the latter, in a state of necessity, is much *greater* than the disadvantage of the *former*, in a state of liberty. The former, in a state of *liberty*, is left to his *free choice*, whether he will be foolish, and vicious, and consequently miserable, or not; whereas the latter, in a state of *necessity*, is *necessarily so*, *independent* of his election; which renders necessity, upon the whole, *less perfect*, and a much more *unfair* and an *unequal* constitution of things, than that of a state of liberty. If it should be said, that those who are necessarily foolish, vicious, and miserable, are so, thro' some weakness or defect in their *understanding*, which renders them incapable of *discerning*, what is their *greater good*, or the *way* to attain it; and that if this *defect*, in point of judgment, were added a *liberty of choice*, then, the present constitution of things would be much *less perfect* than it is. I *answer*, that as, in the present constitution of things, a *fallible* \* judgment is *unavoidable*, how *imperfect* and *inconvenient* soever it may be supposed to be, because a man cannot possibly discover all the circumstances and consequences which attend

\* Note, By a *fallible judgment*, I mean such as is liable to be misled by a wrong or by an imperfect perception of things, which is the case of man,

some cases ; so a *liberty of choice*, with respect to happiness, in the present constitution of things, as far as our happiness depends upon our own *agency*, is likewise *unavoidable*, how *imperfect* and *inconvenient* soever such a liberty of choice may be supposed to be ; because there are *various kinds* of pleasure, which suit and affect the various parts of our constitution, and which offer themselves, as *candidates* for our election ; and because *agency* and *necessity* are *incompatible*. For as a self-moving power, which is *essential* to agency, cannot be moved or caused to be exerted, by a cause *external* to itself, for, then, it will not be a *self-moving* power ; so, when it is exerted, there must be a power and liberty either to *exert* it, or to *suspend* the exertion of that power ; because, if it is necessarily exerted, then, the ground of that necessity must be *in*, and *from* itself, *independent* of every thing *external* to itself ; and as, in such a case, there must be some thing in nature which is the *ground* of that necessity ; so such necessity would *always* cause the exertion of that power, except it be *restrained* by some *external* cause ; whereas *experience* shews that this is not the case. If it should be said, that tho' a self-moving power *cannot* be *caused* to be exerted, by a cause *external* to itself ; yet external things may give *occasion* for that *exertion*, as well when such exertion is the produce of *necessity*, as when it the produce of a *free choice* ; and thus the perception of the *greater good* gives occasion for the self-moving power *necessarily* to exert itself ; or, in other words, it will always be *necessarily* exerted, when under *such circumstances*, and not otherwise. I *answer*, for an *external* thing, or the *perception* of that thing, to be the *occasion* of a self-moving power necessarily to exert itself, and not be the *ground* of such necessity, is to me absurd. For as, in the present



case, *motion* cannot take place, without the *perception* of some external object or thing, and as it does *necessarily result* from such a perception; so from hence it will follow, that the *external object*, or the *perception* of that object, is the *necessary cause*, and not the occasion of such motion, and, consequently, there is not a *self-moving power*. Whereas, in the case of *liberty*, tho' the self-moving power will not be exerted, unless some motive be the ground or reason of it; yet action does not *necessarily* follow the perception of such a motive, but a man is at liberty to *exert* or *suspend* the exertion of that power, notwithstanding. So that, as far as our *own happiness* depends upon our *own agency*, it must, in the nature of the thing, depend upon our *own free choice* also. To this I may add, that *wisdom* and *folly*, except such folly as is expressed by the term *idiotism*, *virtue*, and *vice*, when applied to a person, cannot possibly be the produce of *necessity*; these being constituted not by a *right* or *wrong* perception or judgment of things, but by a *wise*, or *foolish*, a *virtuous*, or a *vicious* choice, and *choice* supposes liberty. Again, I answer, *secondly*, that necessity does not confine our choice to the greater good; but, on the contrary, it takes away *all* choice, necessity and choice being *incompatible*. Choice stands opposed to *compulsion*, whether that compulsion be the result of an *external cause*, or whether it results *necessarily* from the *constitution* of the subject, thus compelled; so that liberty is *essentially* necessary to the idea of *choice*. And, therefore, to suppose a man *capable* of chusing, and likewise that his choice is *necessarily* confined to the greater good, when there are *several goods* offered, as the *objects* of his election; this is absurd, and a contradiction. And, if we say that a man *cannot* chuse the *less* good; this cannot, is not of *nature's*, but of our *own* making. Again, I answer, *thirdly*, that liberty does not *destroy* the difference

difference in things, nor render all objects and motives *indifferent* to the person, in which it resides, but the contrary; because the difference in things is the *ground* and foundation of choice, and choice supposes liberty, as I have already observed. Suppose a *less* present good comes in competition with a *greater* that is future, and suppose a man at *liberty* to chuse either; if he chuses the *former*, it is not, because it is the *less*, but because it is a *present* good; and, if he chuses the *latter*, it is not, because it is *future*, but because it is the *greater* good; and it is the *difference* of objects, which admits of different *comparisons*, that is the ground and foundation of his choice, in either case; so that he does not chuse, at a *venture*, as the present argument supposes. Again, I answer, *fourthly*, that liberty does not *destroy* the use of our *senses*, our *appetites*, our *passions*, and our *reason*; but, on the contrary, it plainly supposes the *use* of them. For tho' motives are *not* the cause, yet they are the *occasion* of action; seeing the active faculty will not be exerted, unless some motive be the ground or reason of it. And, therefore, suppose *appetite* and *reason* come in *competition*, with respect to man's choice, and suppose him at *liberty* to follow either, his liberty, in this case, does not take away the use of his *appetite*, or his *reason*, but plainly supposes the *use* of both; because, without the use of these, there would be no place for *choice*. Again, I answer, *fifthly*, that *perfections* are usually distinguished into *natural* and *moral*. By *natural* perfections are meant such as necessarily result from the *nature* and *constitution* of any being; and, thus, the *divine understanding* and the *divine power* are called *natural perfections* in God. By *moral* perfections are meant such as result from the *will* or *choice* of any being; and, thus, the *divine wisdom* and the

*divine goodness* are called the *moral perfections* of the *Deity*; because these do not result necessarily from his nature, but depend upon his will. That is, God is perfectly *wise* and *good*, as, or because he *chooses* always to act a *wise* and a *good* part. So that to say, nothing is perfect, but what is *necessarily* so, is to destroy all *moral* perfections. If it should be said that God is *necessarily wise* and *good*. I answer, that whatever perfection results *naturally*, and *necessarily*, from the constitution of any being, that is not a *moral*, but only a *natural* perfection; and, in this case, wisdom and goodness, are not the wisdom and goodness of a *person*, but of a *constitution*, if I may so speak, and may as properly be ascribed to a *clock*, when all its parts and movements are fitly adjusted, to answer a *wise* and a *good* purpose. For tho' one is *intelligent*, and the other *unintelligent*, and tho' intelligence is necessary in *one* subject, and *not* in the other, to answer the purposes of each; yet as motion, together with its directions and regulations, *result necessarily* from the *constitution* of each subject, *independent* of the free choice or election of either; therefore, they are not *moral*, nor *personal*, but *natural*, and *constitutional* perfections in both; tho', I think, when we ascribe wisdom and goodness to *God*, we consider them of another kind, and more valuable, than when we ascribe wisdom and goodness to a *clock*. Upon the whole, I observe, that as this argument is founded, for the most part, on *groundless principles*; so to argue, from the *degrees* of perfection, to the *truth* of things, is very *unsafe*; because it may lead us into *error*. Thus, it is most evident, and, I presume, it admits of no dispute, that an *infallible* judgment is *more perfect* than a *fallible* judgment; because the former is *absolutely secure* from error, whereas the latter is *liable* to it. Now, to say, in  
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this case, that because an *infallible* judgment is *more perfect* than a *fallible* judgment, therefore, man has an *infallible* judgment, would be to draw a conclusion which is manifestly *false*, in fact. Again,

*Fifthly*, It is urged, in prejudice of *liberty*, that it is *destructive* of *morality*, and that it renders *rewards* and *punishments* useless; seeing liberty destroys the *difference* in things, and renders all objects and motives *indifferent* to the person, in which it resides. To which it is sufficient to answer, that this argument is founded upon a *groundless presumption*, as I have shewn above. *Natural good* and *evil* are *pleasure* and *pain*, or happiness and misery; *moral good* and *evil* are the *right* or the *wrong* application of that power, which is lodged in every intelligent being, to *introduce* or *communicate* pleasure and pain, or happiness and misery, as aforesaid. And as things are thus *distinct* and *different* in themselves; so that difference is the *ground* and *foundation* of choice, and *choice* supposes liberty. But, for the farther clearing of this point, I beg leave to observe, that, when a *less* present good comes in competition with a *greater* that is future, these goods admit of a *two-fold* comparison; *first*, with respect to *degree*, one is *less*, and the other is *greater*; *secondly*, with respect to *time*, one is *present*, and the other *future*: Now, let a man chuse either of these, upon the principles of liberty, these objects are *not* indifferent to him, neither does he chuse, at a *venture*, as the present argument supposes; but, on the contrary, it is the *difference* in those goods, in one or other of the *forementioned comparisons*, which is the ground and foundation of his choice, in either case. As to *rewards* and *punishments*, I have elsewhere shewn, what is the ground and foundation of them, in my former *Reflections on Natural Liberty*, to which I refer my reader. Again,



Sixthly, It is urged in prejudice of *liberty*, that as man is a creature capable of *pleasure* and *pain*; so he cannot but *desire* those things he judgeth will *promote* his pleasure, or *remove* his pain, and be *averse* to whatever tends to the *contrary*. And as his desire is thus *necessarily* excited; so he cannot but *will*, or *nill*, the acting agreeably to his *greater degree* of either of these. And that this is the truth of the case is inferred from hence, *viz.* it is judged as evident that these do follow one another, as that any other effect does, or will follow its *physical cause*. Upon which I observe, that *all pleasure*, considered as pleasure, is the *natural object of desire*; and *all pain*, considered as pain, is the *natural object of aversion*. And as pleasure and pain admit of *degrees*, such as greater, and less; so desire and aversion admit of the like distinction. And as pleasure or pain may be *present*, or at a *distance*; so desire and aversion may be the produce of some *present affection*, or *passion*, or the produce of *judgment*; and, thus, the same thing may be the object of desire excited by some present affection, and yet be the object of aversion arising from judgment; or it may be the object of aversion arising from some present passion, and yet be the object of desire arising from judgment. Thus, a man's *judgment* may lead him to *desire* that bitter *poison*, which his *natural affection*, or *passion*, leads him to *loath*, and be most *averse* to. And as affection and judgment lead a man both to desire, and to be averse to the same thing; that is, to like it, upon one account, and dislike it, on another; so action does not *necessarily* follow either, but flows from a principle *distinct* and *different* from them both. For if desire arising from either *affection*, or *judgment*, did necessarily move and direct the active faculty, then, action would, in *every instance*, follow the one, or, in *every instance*, it would follow

follow the other ; but *experience* shews that this is not the case ; because, in some instances, action follows such desires as are the produce of *appetite*, or *affection*, and, in others, it follows such desires as are the produce of *reason* or *judgment*, when these come in competition. So that, tho' *desire*, in one or other of those views, does always *precede* action ; yet it does not, in either case, *necessarily* determine the active faculty, it being a matter of *free choice* to a man, which of them shall be the *ground* or *reason* of action to him. And, therefore, tho' *present pleasure* naturally excites the affection of *desire*, and *present pain*, or the pain which is immediately in view, naturally excites the affection, or passion, which we call *aversion* ; yet experience shews, that suitable action does not necessarily follow either of these ; because a man can *deny* himself the present enjoyment of the most *pleasing*, in point of affection, and thereby the most *desirable* object, and he can chuse the most *acute*, and thereby the pain which nature is most *averse* to. And when *two goods* come in competition, a greater, and a less ; or when *two evils* likewise come in competition, tho' a man cannot judge of these otherwise, than as the case appears to his understanding ; yet suitable *willing*, or *nilling*, does not necessarily follow ; because experience shews, that, in some instances, men act agreeably to their *judgment*, and in others, they act *against* it. Thus, the *drunkard*, as I observed above, will sometimes *gratify* his desire of liquor, tho' he is reminded of, and convinced, at the time, that it will draw on him such *disorder* and *pain*, as will be much more than an equivalent to the pleasure he tastes from his present enjoyment ; and this, I think, is acting *against* judgment. Again, there is no man who believes a *future state* of rewards and punishments, but desires to be *happy* in another

ther world, and who, in point of *judgment*, prefers and desires the eternal happiness of another world before all the pleasures he is capable of enjoying in this; and this, I think, is the greatest degree of *desire* arising from judgment; because there is no desirable object, in point of judgment, which is equal to it; and yet there are many persons who, upon the *view* of a present enjoyment, will *hazard* the happiness of another world, for the sake of a short-lived pleasure here, and, when the enjoyment is over, their foolish choice gives them great *remorse* and *uneasiness* of mind. If it should be said, that, in such instances, the desire arising from affection was *stronger* than that arising from judgment, and that this was the natural and necessary *ground* of such a choice. I answer, That desires arising from appetite, or affection, and desires arising from judgment, are not *greater*, or *less*, with respect to each other; because there is not any thing in nature to be the *foundation* of such a distinction, they not being capable of being compared; so that what is urged is of no force. If it should be said, that desires arising from affection are, in their *kind*, strong, and have a greater influence upon the active faculty in man, than desires arising from judgment. I answer, If this were the case, then, when affection and judgment come in *competition*, action would always follow *affection*; whereas experience shews the contrary; seeing, in many instances, men *controul* their affections, and act *agreeably* to their reason. Upon the whole, I think, it appears that the *greater degree* of desire, or aversion, does not *necessarily* determine the active faculty, as is here supposed. Again;

*Seventhly*, It is thought that there is a *difference* betwixt *constitution*, and the *motives* to action arising from it; and these are considered, as *two* distinct principles or excitements to action in man.

That

That is, if I understand the case aright, there is a difference betwixt *reason*, considered as a part of the *human constitution*, and a *motive* arising from *reason*; and likewise betwixt *appetite*, or *affection*, considered, as a part of that *constitution*, and a *motive* arising from *appetite*, and each of these are considered, as excitements to actions distinct from each other. And that, when man does not act *agreeably* to his greater degree of desire, or aversion, whether these are the produce of affection, or judgment, it is because he is *necessarily* determined, from his *constitution*, to act otherwise.

Upon which I observe, that this *distinction* has no foundation in nature. For what is understanding or reason, as a part of the human constitution, but a *capacity* of discerning the *fitness* or *unfitness* of an action? and what is a motive from reason, but an invitation to act, or not to act, *consonant* to that fitness or unfitness, arising from the *exercise* of our discerning faculty, as aforesaid? So that a motive from reason is not a principle or foundation of action, distinct from our reasoning faculty, but flows from the exercise of it. And what is *affection*, or *appetite*, when considered as a part of the *human constitution*; but a *capacity* or disposition to taste some sensual pleasure; and what is a *motive* from *appetite*, but an *exertion* of that disposition, in desiring to taste such pleasure; which desire is an invitation to enjoyment; so that here is a *distinction*, without a *difference*. It is true, a particular constitution may taste more intense pleasure from one sensual enjoyment than from another, and that will afford a motive or reason for *preferring* in our choice that particular kind of enjoyment to any other, when these come in competition; but, in this case, there is no difference betwixt *constitution*, and the *motives* arising from it, neither does constitution *necessarily* determine the active faculty;



faculty; because we not only *can*, but do, in some instances, *controul* it in all its branches. That is, at some times, we *deny* ourselves that pleasure which our natural appetite leads us most strongly to desire; and, in other instances, we *gratify* our appetite, in opposition to our reason. Again,

*Eighthly*, There is a distinction made betwixt men of *weak* and *strong reason*, and likewise betwixt men of *weak* and *strong appetites*; and men are supposed to be *necessarily* determined to act, or not to act, as either of these are *stronger* or *weaker* in them. Upon which I observe, that if by this be meant, that some men are naturally better qualified to *discern* and *judge* of the fitness or unfitness of an action, than others; and this makes men to be of strong or of weak reason; then, I say that where the fitness or unfitness of an action is *not discerned*, there a motive from reason does not take place; and, consequently, such an instance does not come into the present question; and if the fitness or unfitness of an action is *discerned*, then, reason is not stronger, or weaker, but is the same in every man; viz. it discerns the fitness or unfitness of the action, and that it is more or less so; and this is discerned by every man; and there is not more or less discerned by any man. And, in this view of the case, the forementioned distinction does not answer any purpose. But if by *strong* or *weak reason*, be meant men's making, or not making reason the *general rule* and measure of their actions, so that men of *strong reason* are those who *generally* act agreeable to reason, and thereby *controul* their appetites and passions more easily, and with less reluctance; and men of *strong appetites* are such as *generally* follow what their *naturally* appetites lead them to desire, and thereby those appetites are *restrained* with greater reluctance; then, I say, that to be of *strong* or of *weak reason*, &c. is a matter  
of

of *free choice* to every man; because he may make either reason, or appetite, the rule of action to himself, as he pleases. So that neither reason, nor appetite, let them be considered in what way soever, necessarily determine men to act, as is here supposed. Again,

*Ninthly*, It is urged that man is under a necessity to act, if he is *influenced* by any motive whatever, provided some *equal* or *greater* motive doth not hinder, and *experience* is urged, as proof, in the present case. Upon which I observe, that motives, arising from the *same branch* of the constitution, may be *greater*, or *less*; but motives, which arise from *different branches* of the constitution, admit of *no* comparison. As thus, my *desire to drink* may be greater, or less, as the liquor is more or less desirable, or as my thirstiness is greater or less, which excites that desire; and the *reasonableness* or *unreasonableness* of my gratifying that desire may be greater, or less, in proportion to the greater or less good, or evil, I may sustain thereby; but if *reason* and *appetite* come in *competition*, it is not the greater or less motive, with respect to these, but a *freedom of election* which is the foundation of action, with respect to either. For tho' motives from appetites may be stronger, or weaker, as I observed, when compared with each other, and tho' motives from reason may admit of the like distinction, yet a motive from *appetite* and a motive from *reason* cannot be *greater*, or *less*, with respect to each other, because there is not any *foundation* in nature for such a distinction. And, therefore, when men judge that a person is under a *necessity* to act from any motive whatever, if some equal or greater motive doth not hinder, because, they think, they *experience* this to be their case; all that they experience, I think, is only this; *viz.* that with respect to action, *sometimes* they follow their

their *reason*, and sometimes their appetite, when it is a matter of *free choice* to them, which of these they will follow. And whichever of these *they do follow*, that is, whichever of these is to them the *ground* or *reason* of action, that, in that instance, they call the *strongest* motive; and the motive whose persuasive influence they *reject*, that, in this instance they call the *weakest*; the determination itself being the only *ground* of that distinction.

These few points I have here taken notice of, because I would remove every *difficulty* which the principle of *liberty*, and which, I think, is the *truth* of the case, may be supposed to be *incumbered* with. I will conclude with recommending one thing to my reader's consideration; *viz.* if *action* in man, allowing the expression to be the produce of *necessity*; then, *self-consciousness* of the good, or evil, of our actions is a gross *delusion*; because it was not in a man's power to have done otherwise than he did; and the *pleasure*, or *unhappiness*, which naturally flows from such a consciousness, is, in *reason*, *groundless*. But, I think, the principle of self-consciousness, of the good, or evil, of our actions, which naturally introduces happiness, or unhappiness, as aforesaid, is *natural*, and a part of the *human constitution*; and if this be the case as, I think, it is, then, surely, it will be allowed, that the placing such a principle in the human constitution must be *wrong*, because it is an *unreasonable* introduction to misery: and, if so, then, I think, it will be difficult to *account* for such wrong conduct in God, that is, for his placing such a principle of self-consciousness in man which in *reason*, ought not to be in him, whether we consider action in God, as the produce of *liberty*, or *necessity*.

If

If it should be said, that tho' the pleasure and uneasiness, which naturally flow from a consciousness of the good, or evil, of our actions, are, in reality, *groundless*; yet this answers a *good purpose*, by leading men to the practising the like good actions, and preventing them from practising the like evil ones, and, therefore, such a consciousness was *rightly* placed in human nature. I answer, 'The remorse and uneasiness of mind, which flows from the consciousness of having done a *bad* action, is very often the immediate attendant of those actions, which are the grounds of it; and tho' those bitter reflections will, upon *some occasions*, return upon a man; yet it is seldom, when he is in the *pursuit* of any enjoyment, but rather, when those pursuits are over, and he is taking a *review* of them, or when under some *affliction*, or at the apprehension of death, and at such times as not to answer the purposes of *restraint* to him. So that the consciousness of having done a bad action is not only *groundless* in itself, but it is an *unreasonable* introduction to *misery*, supposing action in man to be the produce of necessity.





T R A C T XXIX,  
T H E  
*G L O R Y of C H R I S T:*

O R,

A Discourse upon those Words, as they are in St. *Paul's* second Epistle to the *Corinthians*, Chap. viii. Verse 23. Wherein is shewn, That the *Christian Salvation* is the only proper Expedient to take away Divine Displeasure, and to render Men truly acceptable and well-pleasing to *God*, Humbly offer'd to the Consideration of the Modern *Deists*.

**I**T will be needless for me to enquire, who was the *author* of this *epistle*, and to whom it was sent? This being specified in the title; *namely*, that it was wrote by the *Apostle* St. *Paul*, and was directed to the *Corinthians*; that is, to the *Christians* at *Corinth*, an antient city in *Greece*. Neither shall I, at present, concern myself to enquire into the *subject* of this epistle, any farther than to observe, that as the *Christians*, at that time in *Judea*, were driven into great streights and difficulties, thro' the violent persecutions which the *Jews* stirr'd up against them; so St. *Paul*, who sympathiz'd with them in their afflictions, did all he could

could to render their burden as easy to them as possibly. And, accordingly, he took care to acquaint the several churches, which were under his inspection, with the afflicted state of their brethren in *Judea*; and call'd upon them to raise contrabutions for their relief. And thus, he address'd himself to the *Corinthians*, provoking them by the example of the great leberality of their neighbours, the *Macedonians*; and stirring them up, by many other arguments, to a chearful and a generous distribution of their charity. Upon this occasion, he likewise sent *Titus* and others to *Corinth*, to collect and receive their contributions; men who had devoted themselves to promote the *common tranquillity*, and, therefore, were highly worthy of such a trust. And, as it was very natural and proper for the *Corinthians* to enquire, *who* or *what* the persons were, by whose hand they should send this gift? so *St Paul* took care to satisfy them in this particular, by giving them a character, in the verse of which the text is a part.

*Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you: or our brethren be enquir'd of, they are the messengers of the churches and the glory of Christ.* As much as if he had said, if any ask the character of *Titus*, I presume, this will satisfy he is my partner in the *labours* and *sufferings* of the *gospel*. and assisted me much in my travels and preaching to the *Gentiles*. Or, if our *brethren*, whom I have sent with him, be enquir'd of, they are persons of such reputation, and whose character and conduct are so well approv'd of by the churches, that they have constituted them their *messengers*. Yea, they are such, upon whom the *gospel* has had its *genuine effect*, and who reflect back great *honour* upon its *author*: they are the glory of Christ. As the *success* of any undertaking *crowns* the attempt, and gives glory to the *undertaker*;

*undertaker*; and as every performance brings more or less glory to the performer, as it more or less answers the design : so *Christ* receiv'd much glory from the *brethren* whom *St. Paul* sent to *Corinth* inasmuch as the purposes of his ministry were answer'd upon them. The gospel of *Christ* had made such an impression upon their minds, as that they could willingly forego their own *ease, pleasure, and profit*, when their labour and service became useful and necessary to the *common good*. And, accordingly, they took upon them that long, laborious, and hazardous work, of going from place to place, in the provinces of *Greece*, to collect the churches contributions, for relieving their distressed brethren under persecution, and to carry what they had thus collected to *Palestine*. This I call a long, laborious, and hazardous undertaking; whether they travelled from *Greece* to *Judea*, by land, or by sea. And, thus, these brethren gave a noble instance of the blessed effects of the gospel of *Christ*, when it is receiv'd as it ought to be; and, thus, *Christ* receiv'd much glory from them. They were the glory of *Christ*. This is the character *St. Paul* gives of the persons referr'd to, which certainly render'd them worthy of that trust, he desir'd the *Corinthians* might repose in them. Having shewn the *occasion*, and given the *sense* of the text; two things naturally offer themselves to be consider'd, *viz. first*, What was the grand purpose of *Christ's* mission? And, *secondly*, how the means he used were adapted to answer that design? These two points being discours'd, from hence it will easily and evidently appear, in the *third place*, What it is to glorify *Christ*, and who they are that in reality do so. Again,

*First*, I am to consider, *What was the grand purpose of Christ's mission?* And, here, if we examine those sacred records, which relate to his person

son and ministry, and which alone are capable of giving us satisfaction in the present case; we shall find, that the great end which Christ had to prosecute, and for which he was sent into this world, *was to take away divine displeasure, and to render men acceptable and well-pleasing to God.* Thus, it was prophesied of him, *Isaiah xlix. 6. That he should be given for light to the Gentiles; and that he should be for salvation unto the ends of the earth,* Acts xiii. 47. Thus, *Zachariah* rejoiced at the birth of *John the Baptist*, because *he was to be the Prophet of the Highest, who was to give the knowledge of salvation to his people by the remission of their sins,* Luke i. 77. Thus, the angel, at Christ's birth, saluteth the shepherds with this joyful acclamation; *Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord,* Luke ii. 10, 11. And, thus, Christ declar'd concerning himself, *that he was come to save that which was lost, as in Matt. xviii. 11. And that he was come, not to destroy mens lives, but to save them, as in Luke ix. 5, 6. And that he came to seek and to save that which was lost, Luke xix. 10. And that he came not to judge the world, but to save it, John xii. 47.* And, thus, by way of eminence, Christ is call'd *a Saviour*, and *the Saviour*, and the like, *Acts v. 30, 31. Chap. xiii. 23. Phil. iii. 20. 1 Tim. i. 10. Tit. i. 4. 1 John iv. 14.* Thus, again, Christ's gospel is call'd *salvation*, *Acts xiii. 26. Chap. xxviii. 28. Rom. i. 16. Eph. i. 13.* In short, Christ's gospel is call'd the *ministry of reconciliation*; and he is said to *reconcile us to God*, 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ; and hath committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was, in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their*



to which all his actions should be principally directed. And when man carefully pursues the great end of his creation, by rendering himself an agreeable and useful creature ; then, of course, he renders himself *agreeable* and *lovely* in the eyes of his Maker. And, on the other side, when he opposes this end, and sets himself as a bar to the common felicity, he must lay a *just foundation* for divine displeasure. I shall not take upon me to shew, how many ways, and in what instances, men are *injurious* to the common-wealth ; it being sufficient to my present purpose, to observe, that when men covetously pursue their own pleasures and desires, when they are injurious to others, and obstruct the common felicity ; they, then, in the nature of the thing, become the *proper objects* of God's displeasure. Surely, nothing can be more provoking to such a *wise* and *good* Being as God is, than for a moral agent, design'd and constituted to promote a common happiness ; for such an one to kick against his Maker, by disappointing his gracious purposes, and by introducing that *miser*y into being, which he was design'd to prevent. And yet this is the case of every wicked man, who, by his disagreeable and unsocial temper and conduct, *obstructs* the common felicity. Having, thus, discover'd the diseases, by shewing, *What it is, in the nature of the thing, which renders men the suitable and proper objects of divine displeasure ?* I, now, proceed to the remedy ; namely, to shew, *How the means, Christ made use of, become a proper expedient, to take away that displeasure, and to reconcile sinners to God.* And this I shall do, both negatively and positively ; negatively, *how Christ did not do it*, and, positively, *how he did do it.* And,

*First*, I am to shew, how Christ did not do it ; namely, *first*, he did not reconcile sinners unto God,

God, by *acting in them*, and thereby *destroying their agency*. Surely, nothing can be more romantick and wild, than what has enter'd into the heads of some Christians, *viz.* that Christ saves them, by acting in them, and thereby acting for them. Christ is suppos'd to take possession of the sinner, as the devil heretofore was suppos'd to take possession of some men; possessing them, by making use of their faculties, and acting in them. And, thus, Christ, as they imagine, makes use of the faculties of sinners; *he understands*, and *wills*, and *acts in them*, and thereby he *understands*, and *wills*, and *acts for them*; they, as they think, having no ability, since the fall, to understand, will, or act any thing that is *good*, in, or for themselves. I say, Christ did not take this method to save mankind, by destroying their agency, and acting in them; but, on the contrary, he consider'd man, as a *moral agent*, and treated with him, as such, in order to his salvation, as I shall shew in its due place. Neither, if Christ had taken such a method, would it have been effectual to that end. As will appear, if we consider, that as man, in his natural constitution, is a moral agent, which renders him an *accountable creature*; so it is the *right* or the *wrong* use of his *agency*, and that only, which, in the nature of the thing, can render him agreeable or displeasing to his Maker. And, therefore, to suppose that God is either pleas'd or displeas'd with one agent, for what was done in him by the will and agency of another, is most ridiculous and absurd; so that whatever may be the sense of those places in holy writ, which speak of the *Spirit of Christ*, the *grace of Christ*, or the like; they cannot possibly signify the *act* of *Christ* in man, as above explained. And as the fore-mentioned opinion is exceedingly extravagant in itself, so it is most *pernicious to mankind*; because

it disposes the sinner to go on in his folly, and to neglect his repentance and reformation ; he, as he imagines, having no power in himself to perform what is good, and, therefore, he must wait, till *Christ* performs that work in him. Again,

*Secondly*, *Christ* did not save sinners, absolutely and unconditionally, by any *act* of *obedience* to his Father's will, nor by any *act* of *suffering*. If he had lived a *thousand* years, and had suffered a *thousand* deaths, and had felt a *thousand* times more pain and misery, in every death, than the pain and misery he underwent ; this might have rendered him, in his *own* person, so much the more dear and valuable to his Father ; but it could not alter the case, with respect to God's favour, to any other person, whilst that person obstinately continues in his sins, and thereby continues the proper object of God's displeasure. Every sinner is as much, and as truly, a sinner, and as much, and as truly, the object of God's displeasure, on the account of his sins, whilst he continues in them, without repentance, after the obedience and sufferings of *Christ*, as before them ; and, therefore, tho' these are highly subservient to man's salvation, yet they are not, absolutely and unconditionally, the ground and reason of God's mercy and loving-kindness to mankind.

*Thirdly*, *Christ* did not reconcile sinners unto God, by *laying down a set of principles, and making* *mens assent to, or dissent from them, the ground of* *God's favour, or displeasure*. If this had been the case, then, indeed, there would have been some show of reason, for insisting, as the Church of *Rome* does, that there is an *absolute necessity* of an *infallible judge*, to determine in matters of faith, and to guard and secure men from all dangerous errors ; tho' even this would not afford the shadow of a proof, that the *Bishop of Rome* is that infallible

fallible judge. But this is not the case. Faith and infidelity, with regard to any subject, can be no farther *valuable*, or *despicable*, than as they are, as they are not, the proper result of that evidence, or the want of it, upon which each of them is grounded. And, even then, these cannot, in the nature of the thing, be the *ground* of divine favour, or displeasure; because they are not the subjects of our free choice. If we see that the conclusion *justly* follows from the premises, or if we judge the *contrary*; in this case, we are so far passive, as that, if we attend to the subject, we cannot possibly think and judge otherwise of it than we do; and, therefore, it is most absurd and ridiculous, to suppose that God will show his favour *to one*, for seeing what he could *but see*; or his displeasure to another, for not seeing what he *could not see*. And tho' the *absurdity* of this appears, at first view, yet it has entered into the schemes of a multitude of Christians. Each church has its *creed* or *set of principles*, which are set up, as the *standard of christianity*; and men's assent to, or dissent from them, is made the *ground* of divine favour, or displeasure. And men's understandings have been thus misled; and it has been of the most *fatal* consequence to mankind, inasmuch as it hath laid a foundation for that angry and bitter zeal, by which Christians have *persecuted* and *destroyed* one another.

Fourthly, Christ did not reconcile sinners unto God, by *constituting a particular society, or body of men, and making communion with them the ground of divine favour, and separation from the ground of divine displeasure*. I have already shewn, that man is a social creature, and that the great end which he intended he should be in pursuit of, and to which all his actions should be principally directed,



rected, is the *common felicity*. So that the *one society*, into which man, by *nature*, is enter'd, is the *one common-wealth of mankind*. And tho' the body of mankind is divided into nations, kingdoms, families, cities, villages, trades, and the like; and each of these may be said to be particular societies, who have their different interests; yet they are *particular*, not in opposition to, but only as *parts* and *branches* of the one great society, or common-wealth of mankind. And, therefore, a particular society, in the present case, must be such as we are not, by nature, enter'd into. That is, the ground of our association does not arise from our being *men*; and the end of it is something different from the common felicity. Now, as we are not the *better* by being barely in *communion* with such particular societies; and as we are not the *worse*, by being barely in a state of *separation* from them; so communion, or separation, cannot, in the nature of the thing, be the *ground* of divine favour, or displeasure. But tho' this is evidently the case; yet we see what sad work is made in the world upon the account of it. When men consider each other as *Hereticks*, in point of opinion, or as *Schismaticks*, in point of communion; then they *unchristian*, yea, *unman* themselves, by exerting a blind and bitter zeal, in *afflicting* and *grieving* one another. And, thus, christianity is *destroyed*, under a shew of *maintaining* it. Again,

*Fifthly and lastly*, Christ did not reconcile sinners unto God, by *appointing a set of ceremonies*, and *making the use, or the neglect of these, the ground of divine favour, or displeasure*. A ceremony is an external word, or action, which is made to signify whatever the institutor, or the user, pleases. And as the use of a ceremony has no intrinsic or *moral goodness* in it; nor the neglect of it any *moral evil*, any otherwise than as there is good, or evil,

evil, intended by the agent, or good, or evil, consequent upon it; so barely the *use* or *neglect* of these cannot, in the nature of the thing, render men more or less the *proper objects* of God's favour, or displeasure. And this leads me,

*Secondly* and positively, to shew, *How Christ did reconcile sinners unto God, and how the means, he made use of, were adapted to answer that design.* I have already observ'd, that man is a moral agent, that is, he is a creature endow'd with a faculty of understanding, which qualifies him to see the nature, the circumstances, and the consequences of his actions, and thereby to judge of their moral fitness, or unfitness. And he has a power, or is at liberty, to direct and govern his actions, as his judgment shall direct. And as man is a moral agent; so Christ treats with him as such, in order to his salvation, by applying to his *understanding* in the manner following. *Namely,*

*First,* In calling sinners to repentance and amendment of life; and in urging the absolute necessity of that repentance, in order to their salvation. *Secondly,* In laying down the law of love, as the rule and measure of men's duty; requiring them to conduct their lives, that is to say, their tempers and actions, by this law; and assuring them, that, if they do so, they will be approved and accepted of God. And, *thirdly,* by informing mankind, that when they have acted their part in life, and are gone off the stage of action, God will call them to an account for their conduct, and will finally acquit, or condemn them, as they have, or have not, repented and amended their ways, and as they have, or have not, submitted themselves, and govern'd their tempers and actions, by the law of love, as aforelaid. This, then, is the way and method which Christ made use of to save sinners, *viz.* to change them from

the whole law in the affirmative, *If there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* Love is the beginning, the end, and the perfection of the law; or, as the Apostle expresses it, it is *the fulfilling of the law.* And as Christ propos'd and required our subjection to this law of love; so he represents it under different characters. He calls it, *The great commandment, The old commandment, The new commandment, His commandment, His Father's commandment,* and the like; that so, if possible, he might engage us in the love and practice of it. He likewise makes our submission to this law the only ground and mark of our discipleship to him: *Hereby, saith he, shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* So that the living a life of love, a life spent in doing good to all around us, and in contributing to the common tranquillity all we can, is what Christ propos'd and recommended, as the only and the sure way to God's favour. Again,

*Thirdly and lastly,* Christ apply'd himself to man, as a moral agent, in order to his salvation, by *informing and assuring him, that when he has acted his part in life, and is gone off the stage of action, God will call him to an account for his conduct, and will finally acquit, or condemn him, as he has, or has not, repented and amended his ways, and as he has, or has not submitted himself, and directed his temper and actions by the law of love, as aforesaid.* Christ assures us, that, after the dissolution of the present state of things, the *body of mankind* shall be summon'd to appear in judgment; and that, as he is constituted to be their Judge, so he shall separate the *righteous* from the *wicked*, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and he shall place the *righteous* on his right-hand, as a  
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token of favour, and the wicked on his left, in token of displeasure. Then he shall say to those on his right-hand, *Come ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world.* Ye have shewn yourselves to be my true Disciples, in that you have conducted yourselves by the law of love; *for I was, in my brethren of the common-wealth of mankind, an hungred, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick and in prison, and ye came unto me.* And then shall he say to those on his left-hand *Go ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:* Ye were usefess and unprofitable to your fellow-creatures, in the place and age in which you lived; *for I was, in my needy members of human society, an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; naked, and ye clothed me not; I was sick and in prison, and ye visited me not.* And as the rule of judging will be the *law of love*, and sentence will be given, according as men have, or have not, conducted their tempers and actions by this law; so no plea will be admitted in the *sinner's favour*, where obedience to that law has been wanting. *In that day, saith Christ, many shall say unto me Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works:* And then will I say unto them, *depart from me, I know you not, ye workers of iniquity.* Thus, Christ apply'd himself to men, as moral agents, in order to their salvation. And this was the means he used to save them by; so that, in strictness of speech, this, and this only, is the *christian salvation*. And the truth is, there is no other expedient, but this, which could possibly be effectual to that end. For as man is a moral agent, and as he, by the abuse of his agency, in acting

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an unfocial part in the creation, has render'd himself the proper object of God's displeasure ; so, in the nature of the thing, nothing, but a change in man, by his *ceasing to do evil*, and by a right use of his agency in *doing well*, can recommend him to God's mercy and grace. The doing evil is the only foundation of *God's displeasure* ; and, therefore, the ceasing to do evil, and doing the contrary, must be the *only proper expedient* to take away that displeasure, and to render men acceptable and well-pleasing to their Maker. Whilst men continue in their sins, they must, of course, continue the proper objects of God's *dislike* ; and when they forsake their sins, and return to their duty, acting a part suitable to, and becoming their rational and manly nature, they must, of course, become the proper objects of his *approbation and love* ; the effecting which change is the way in which Christ becomes a *Saviour to mankind*. Thus,

Having shewn, in the *first place*, What was the grand purpose of Christ's mission, *namely*, to take away divine displeasure, and to render men acceptable and well-pleasing to God ; and having likewise shewn, in the *second place*, How the means Christ made use of were proper expedients to answer that design, from hence, I think, it will evidently appear,

*Thirdly, What it is to glorify Christ, and who they are that, in reality, do so.* I have already observ'd, that it is the *success* of any undertaking, which *crowns* the attempt, and gives glory to the *undertaker* ; and that every performance brings more or less glory to the performer, as it more or less answers the design. And as Christ came to save sinners, by engaging them to turn from the evil of their ways, and to subject their tempers and actions to the law of love ; so, from hence, it will follow, that the only way in which Christ is, or  
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can be glorified by us, as our Saviour, is, to let the gospel have its due effect, and the purposes of his ministry be answer'd upon us; and then we shall be like the brethren whom St. Paul sent to Corinth, viz. we shall be *The glory of Christ*. It is not the giving our assent to a collection of speculative propositions; nor a strong confidence that Christ will save us; nor the being united to a society call'd by Christ's name; nor the constant attendance upon a set of ceremonial observances; nor the being noisy and troublesome for Christ, thereby disturbing the peace and quiet of the neighbourhood in which we live; nor the drinking bumpers to the Church's prosperity; tho' by the way the term Church, in modern language, generally signifies the Clergy, the authority and rights of the Church being no other than the authority and rights of the Clergy; nor the afflicting and grieving our fellow-creatures, upon Christ's account, either because they are not christians at all, or because they do not come up to our standard of christianity: I say, it is not these, nor the zeal and resentment that frequently spring from them, which Christ is glorified by. Some of these minister shame and reproach to the christian name, but none of them minister to Christ's praise. Some of them reflect back great dishonour upon God and Christ, with regard to their moral character; but none of them add to their praise, by shewing them to be either wise or good. The true way to glorify Christ is to reflect seriously upon those important truths, which he has published to the world, and to let those truths have their proper influence upon our minds and lives; by changing us from disagreeable and hurtful, to agreeable and useful members of society; and then we shall add much glory to Christ our Lord. For as he undertook to save sinners in this way; so when his end is thus answer'd, then it is that Christ is glorified by

by us, Would we, then answer the character of *true christians*, and would we bring much glory to *Christ*, our *Master* and *Saviour*? let us reform our tempers and actions. Let us correct every disorderly, selfish, brutal, and inhuman appetite and passion and bring every thought into captivity to Christ's law of love. Let us put on such a temper and behaviour, as will render us a blessing to all around us; by removing every uneasiness and every impediment to their happiness, and by contributing all we can to their comfort and felicity. In a word, Let Christ's gospel have its due effect upon us, by making us *good men*, and then Christ will receive much glory from us; we shall be *The glory of Christ*. *If any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you; or if the brethren be enquir'd of, they are the messengers of the churches, and The glory of Christ.* Thus, having gone thro' the several points which naturally offer'd themselves to be consider'd, from the words of the text; I shall only make a few short remarks from the whole, and so conclude. And,

*First*, I observe, that tho' the *christian salvation* is so clearly described, and so evidently set forth in the *gospel*; yet not any thing has been more generally mistaken. Men, yea, christians, have chosen any, yea, every other way to salvation, than the way which Christ hath shewn and recommended to them. They would rather that Christ would save them, by *acting in them*, or by *doing*, or *suffering for them*, or in any other way, than by his *putting it upon them, to work out their own salvation, as aforesaid*. But, alas! none of those ways can possibly do it. For as their sin and folly, which is the ground of divine displeasure, is the *product* of their own will and agency; so nothing but such a *repentance* and *reformation*, which is the product of their own will and agency also, can be the

*ground*



ground and reason of God's mercy and loving-kindness to them. Again,

Secondly, I observe, that *Protestantism* is not a just ground of confidence, with regard to God's favour. For tho' a man separates himself from the Church of *Rome*, and joins in communion with a reform'd; yet if he retains a vile and disagreeable temper and conduct, he will be vile and disagreeable in the eyes of God; his foremention'd reformation will not qualify him to receive that sentence, of, *Come ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, &c.* nothing less than a mind and life of love, like the mind and life of that heavenly Father, will qualify us for, and entitle us to so great a blessing. It is true, *Protestants* have cut of the absurd principles, enormous claims, and superstitious practices of the Church of *Rome*; and thus far they have a just foundation for glorying; but, alas! this alone is but a superficial reformation, which, if it proceed no farther, will not avail any thing to salvation. This is like washing the outside of the cup and platter, whilst the inside, *viz.* our tempers and actions, are full of rottenness and all uncleanness. Would we then be inform'd in good earnest, and in such a manner as that it may be a proper foundation of glorying to us; let us take care that the gospel of Christ may have its due effect, and that the purposes of Christ's ministry be answer'd upon us. Let us correct every disorderly appetite and passion, and conduct our tempers and actions by the law of love, and make our lives subservient to the common felicity; and then we shall be reform'd, indeed. Then we shall answer our character, as *reform'd christian*; yea, we shall be *The glory of Christ*. Again,

Thirdly, I observe, that *scepticks* and *infidels* have no just foundation for glorying over, nor insulting christianity, as an *absurd* and an *unreasonable* pro-



posal made to mankind; because christianity, or that which may justly and truly be call'd the christian salvation, is perfectly free from all *such imputations*, being founded in the nature and reason of things. It is true, the schemes of christians have been too often mix'd and compounded of *some true*, and *some absurd* and *contradictory* propositions; and this has given too just occasion to unbelievers to *triumph* over christianity, as a *ridiculous* thing. But then it ought to be remember'd, that nothing is strictly and properly the christian salvation, but that only which *Christ propos'd* to save men by. He never pretended to save men in any other way, than by engaging them to *make themselves* the suitable and proper objects of God's mercy and grace; by turning from the evil of their ways and bringing forth the fruits of newness of life. This, and this only, is the christian salvation. And this is the only way which *Christ propos'd* to save sinners in. And tho' almost every sect of christians have set up something else; which they call the *way to salvation*; and tho' each party contends with much heat and zeal for their particular scheme, and insists upon it, that *that christianity*; yet this cannot, with any colour of justice, be urg'd by the Unbelievers, in *prejudice* of the *christian religion*; because, upon a fair enquiry, it will appear not to belong to it. With regard to any science, the case is the same. If its professors make any blunders, lay down false principles, or draw unjust conclusions; these are not urg'd, in prejudice of the science itself, but are charg'd only upon their several *parents*, as in justice they ought to be. And, surely, in argument, the same equity and fairness ought to be used and allow'd, with regard to *christianity*, as is used and allow'd to all sciences whatever. And, therefore, the *Scepticks* and *Unbelievers*, if they at any time *oppose* christianity, by way of argument, ought not

to blend with it the *doctrines*, and *principles*, and *fancies* of *men*, and argue against these, as against christianity; which unfair practising will not be admitted in any other case. Let them take christianity in its native simplicity, free from all *human mixtures* and *additions*; and then let them find out any *absurdity* or *unreasonableness*, if they can. I have before shewn, what is the christian salvation, or the way which Christ propos'd to save men in. And as this is the only proper expedient, which could be effectual to that end; so it is highly just and reasonable. I shall not here make myself answerable for every expression or mode of speech, which may be urg'd from the *New Testament*, in the present case; but this I do insist upon, that the *christian salvation*, or the way which Christ propos'd to save men in, is *strickly just* and *rational*, suitable to the *nature of God*, and the *nature of man*; and, therefore, it is highly worthy of *all acceptation*. Again,

*Fourthly* and *lastly*, I observe, tho' a *heated passion*, or an *indulged appetite*, or the like, may mislead the understandings of men, by which they are drawn into a *wrong judgment* of persons and things; and that tho' by *fawning* and *flattery*, and by many other practices, we work upon the *weakness* and *vanity* of each other by which means we gain our several ends; yet this cannot be the case, with respect to *God*; for as his understanding cannot possibly be *misled*, so there is nothing but the *love* and *practice* of *virtue* and *true goodness*, which can possibly render us worthy of his regard.

Let me, then, by way of conclusion, desire and intreat, that each and every of us, in our several places and callings, may so deport ourselves, as that we may be *The glory of Christ* in this life, and, after it, may be found *worthy* to enter into the joy of our Lord.

# TRACT XXX.

A

## LETTER of THANKS

TO

The *Author* of the Tract, entitled, *A Friendly Admonition to Mr. Chubb*; wherein the several Things complained of, in that Admonition, are considered.

S I R,

I Have read the *Admonition*; and tho' I do not think your *complaints* well grounded, yet presuming that they are the produce of *kindness*, and intended for *mine* and the *publick* good, therefore, I return you my hearty thanks. Your good wishes are the same, and, therefore, my obligations to you must be the same also, whether your opinion and representation of my writings are *just*, or *not*. And tho' I have hitherto determin'd not to take notice of any *nameless tract*, because, I think, it is dealing with an adversary upon an *unequal foot*; and tho' I intend to abide by this resolution, for the time to come, unless something extraordinary shall dispose me to the contrary, yet I have thought proper, upon this occasion, to trouble you with a *Letter*, because I am willing to write a few words upon those points which are the *grounds* of your complaints against me.

The general charge is, how little *honour*, how little *service* I have done to the *christian religion*. And this *negative* charge is, in the general, supported

ported by complaints of the same kind, viz. that I have ascribed *too little* to *faith*, to *gospel-ordinances*, &c. with respect to the obtaining *God's favour*. And here, if I may be allowed to follow the example of my admonisher, I may likewise take up *my complaint* against him, and say, that he has been too *sparing* in this particular, by omitting to complain against another *person*, who stands equally chargeably with what I am complained of for; one who says not a word of *faith*, or *gospel-ordinances*, &c. when he was *professedly* treating of the *grounds* of *divine favour*, or *displeasure*; one whose sayings are likely to do much more *damage*, if any can arise from such a procedure, than any sayings of mine can be supposed to do. *Matt. xxv. 31.* to the end of the chapter. *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right-hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them, on his right-hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in. Naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he*



say also unto them on the left-hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal. The words I have here cited are a discourse of our Saviour's, in which he gives an account of the *last judgment*, of the grounds of divine favour, or displeasure, and of the *righteous sentences* which will be pronounced upon men, according as they have rendered themselves the suitable and proper objects of *reward*, or *punishment*. And this discourse, surely, affords a large subject for my admonisher to have exercised his *complaining talent* upon. He might, *first*, have observed the *personal character* of him that spake, *viz.* that he was constituted to be a *light* to the *world*, or a sure guide to eternal happiness; by representing to, and pressing upon men whatever was *absolutely necessary*, and would effectually *secure* to them the love and favour of God. *Secondly*, My admonisher might have observed what the *subject* was, which the speaker *professedly* undertook to treat of, *viz.* the *last judgment*, the grounds upon which the Judge will act, and the *sentence* which he will pass upon all men accordingly. And, from hence, he might have argued, in his own way, that for *such a person*, upon *such an occasion*, to take no notice of faith, or gospel-ordinances, of his own merits, and the like, and to declare plain virtue, hu-  
manity.

manity, and charity the ground of God's favour, and the want of these the ground of his *displeasure*, must be *prodigious neglect* indeed; a neglect, that is not very *honourable*, very *serviceable*, or rather, which is *dishonourable* and *disserviceable* to the *christian religion*, and, therefore, ought to be *complained of*. Now, for my admonisher to pass it over in silence, when, if any mischief could arise to mankind from a discourse of this kind, this, surely, must be more *injurious* than any writings of mine can possibly be; and to single out me, to lodge his complaints against, I think, is an instance of *partiality*, or at least a manifest *neglect* in my admonisher. But to return.

The *faults* or *errors* complained of are of *two* kinds, viz. *excess* and *defect*. Those of *excess* are, that I ascribe *too much* to *reason*, or the natural capacities of men, to know and do their duty; and *too much* to *virtue*, *humanity*, and *charity*, in rendering men acceptable and well-pleasing to God. The *errors*, or *faults* of *defect*, are consequences drawn from the foremention'd excesses, *namely*, that I ascribe *too little* to *revelation*, and to *divine assistance*, in the knowledge and practice of our duty, and *too little* to *faith*, to *gospel-ordinances*, and to the *sufferings and death of Christ*, with regard to God's favour and the divine acceptance. These, I think, are the sum of what is charged upon me; and, in speaking to each of these, I think, I shall consider all that my admonisher has complained of. And,

*First*, A *fault*, or *error* of *excess*, which is charged upon me, is, that I ascribe *too much* to *reason*, or the natural capacities of men, to know and do their duty. Here I shall take for granted, as being elsewhere proved, the following proposition, viz. *that God is absolutely wise and good*. This being admitted, it will follow, that God will not

require or expect the performance of any thing, as duty, from any creature, but what is proper for him to require of such a creature, and what is fit for that creature to perform, considering his abilities, his condition, and circumstances in life. I say, this will unavoidably follow, if the forementioned proposition be admitted; because to act otherwise is absolutely inconsistent with that character; that is, if God should require any thing, as duty, from a creature, which was unfit for him to require, or the creature to perform, considering his abilities, circumstances, and condition in life; this would be severe, arbitrary, and unkind, and, consequently, be absolutely inconsistent with wisdom and goodness. Now, if this be the truth of the case, which, I imagine, my admonisher, notwithstanding all his complaints, will not venture to deny, then, it will follow that nothing can be a man's duty, but what comes within the reach of his intellectual faculty to discover, and his active faculty to perform. Whether we consider him standing, or fallen, it alters not the case; because, as his abilities, his circumstances, or condition in life change, so his duty changes with them. And, therefore, if there be any change in the natural abilities of man by the fall of Adam, then, a change of his duty will unavoidably follow; because, as I observed above, nothing in the nature and reason of the thing, with my admonisher's leave, can be a man's duty, but what comes within the reach of his intellectual faculty to discover, and his active faculty to perform; every thing else being unreasonable and unjust, when it is considered as his duty.

If it should be said that Adam fell from a state of innocence into a state of apostacy, and that this fall must make a considerable change of his abilities: I answer, If this be admitted, then, it will follow that, as his abilities decreased, his duty decreased

creased in proportion. But how does it appear that his abilities must suffer such a change by the loss of his innocence? Man, like all other creatures, must be innocent, when called into being, since 'tis absurd to suppose that any creature can be a criminal, *antecedent* to its *existence*, or that it should become a criminal by its *beginning* to be; because existence to every creature is the effect of the power and will of *another*. And as man was made an innocent creature, which was the case of *stones* and *trees*, which were equally free from fault as well as man; so he was likewise made a *moral agent*, which rendered him *capable* of becoming a criminal, by being in a capacity of acting *agreeably* or *contrary* to that *rule* of action, by which he ought to conduct his behaviour. Man *transgressed* that rule, and lost his innocence; but what has this to do with his *abilities*? His intellectual and active faculties were not *destroyed* by his transgression, but continued the same *after* his fall, as *before* it. Man, it is true, was, from his make and constitution, liable to *abuse* his faculties; but it will not follow from thence, that by his transgression he would *lose* the *use* of *them*; the contrary to which is true, because we all experience in ourselves those faculties of intelligence and activity, which *Adam* was created with; which faculties, as they were placed in us by our Creator to *discover* to us our *duty*, and to render us *capable* of *performing* it, so, if rightly used and attended to, they are *sufficient* for that purpose; and to suppose the contrary is to charge God *foolishly*, by representing him, as providing means not sufficient to reach the end they are directed to. And as man is thus naturally qualified to *know* and *do* his duty, so he may do it with *ease* and *certainly*. Duty, surely, is not such a *strange*, *mysterious*, *out of the way* thing, as some would represent it to be;  
neither



neither is God such an *unkind* and *ungenerous* Governour, as to lay a *trap* for his creatures, by making that their duty which is *exceeding difficult* to be known, and which they are in very great *danger* not to come at the knowledge of; much less will he make that their duty which is *above* their ability to discover or perform, for, then, he must be a *hard* and *cruel Master*, indeed. And, here, I would beg my *admonisher* to consider what a compliment he is paying to his kind Creator, by representing, or insinuating, at least, that he makes man's duty so *mysterious* and *great*, as that it is *exceeding difficult*, yea, *above* his ability, to know, or do. This, surely, reflects dishonour upon God's *moral character*, because such a conduct is *unworthy* of a wise and good being. Thus, I have shewn what I ascribe to man, *viz.* an ability to *know* and *do* his duty. And this, I think, is not *too much*, because it is not only what *he is*, but what, in reason, *he ought* to be possessed of; for, if he had any thing less than this, he would have *too little*; too little for God's *honour* and his own *safety*, or rather too little to render him an *accountable creature*, because he ought not, in reason, to be accountable for those things which are *above* his ability to know, or do. And, from the fore-mentioned error or fault of excess, I am,

*Secondly*, By way of consequence, charged with *two errors* or *faults* of *defect*, *viz.* that I ascribe *too little divine revelation*, with respect to the knowledge of our duty; and *too little to divine assistance*, with respect to the practice of it. As to divine revelation, I observe, that tho' man's intellectual faculty qualifies him to discover and know his duty, yet he is *liable* to *neglect* or *lay aside* the use of it, and to commit himself to other *guides* to direct him, in matters of religion; and this renders him very *liable* to be *misled*. And as mankind are, thus, liable to lay  
aside

aside the use of their reason, so this was manifestly the case, in fact. The *Pagan world* were so far from *using*, and *following* their *reason*, in matters of religion, that, on the contrary, they acted *against* it, being under the direction of *oracles*, and *priests*, and men who pretended to have *communication* with the *gods*; so that their *barbarous*, *stupid*, and *burdensome religion* was so far from being the *result* of reason, or of the *defects* of it; that it was introduced by men's *laying aside* their reason in matters of religion, and substituting *pretended revelations* in its stead. And as this was the case, with respect to the *Pagan world*, so, surely, it was an instance of *divine kindness*, and exceeding useful and advantageous to mankind, for *God* to give them a *revelation*, whereby to deliver them from the *bondage* and *corruption* of all pretended revelations, and to restore them to their *manly liberty*, by reducing them to the right use and exercise of their reason in matters of religion. And this was plainly the case of the *christian revelation*, the use of which was not so much to supersede or supply the defects of our natural faculties, as to call us back to a *right use* of them, by laying before us a rule of action, which was our duty, independent of, and antecedent to that revelation, and which our reason *approves* and *justifies*; by prescribing a *mode* of *worship* free from that load of abominable superstitions, which was very *injurious* to the *Pagan world*; and by representing to us the certain *consequences* of a good or bad life, with respect to divine favour, or displeasure; thereby to engage our *passions*, our desires, our hopes and fears in the *interest* of religion. This, I think is the state of the case, with respect to the christian revelation; the giving of which, as it is a very great instance of God's kindness and good-will to mankind, so it is highly useful and beneficial to them. Thus, have I shewn what I ascribe to *revelation*; and, I think, I have not ascribed too little.

*ste*, because, if I should ascribe more, it might be  
*too much* : too much for the *honour* of God, and  
 for the *comfort* and *safety* of mankind. For if re-  
 velation is so *absolutely necessary*, as that man's duty  
 cannot be discover'd without it, then, surely, far  
 the *greatest* part of mankind must be in a *deplorable*  
*condition*, indeed. The christian revelation was  
 not given, till a *multitude* of *ages* were *past* : and,  
 since it has been given, it has been far from *pre-*  
*vailing* all over the world. And, therefore if *man*,  
 by his condition in nature upon the fall of *Adam*,  
 was *unqualified* to know, and, consequently, to do  
 his duty, then, the multitudes of mankind, who  
 have been *destitute of revelation*, must be wholly  
*unaccountable*, so far as their incapacity extends,  
 or else they must be in a *damnable state*, beyond all  
 possibility of relief, for any thing we can *see* to  
 the contrary. For tho' man be considered as un-  
 der a *natural incapacity*, yet, I take it, he is not  
 suppos'd to be *free from guilt* on that account,  
 upon my *admonisher's* principles, and, therefore,  
 he lies open to the heavy displeasure of Almighty  
 God. But this is a doctrine as *absurd* in itself, as  
*dishonourable* to God, and as *uncomfortable* to man-  
 kind, as the doctrine of *absolute election* and *reprobation* :  
 it being equally the same to a man, whether  
 his *damnation* be the effect of an *absolute decree*, or  
 of his *helpless condition in nature*, which it was not  
 in his power to prevent, or deliver himself from.  
 And this I would particularly recommend to the  
 consideration of my *admonisher*; because, I am per-  
 suaded, he would not cast such *dishonour* upon his  
*kind Creator*, if he saw what his principles, in the  
 issue, would *unavoidably* lead to. And tho' he may  
 possibly think to press me hard upon this head, by  
 urging quotations out of the writings of Mr. *Locke*  
 and Dr. *Clarke*, for whom, he may well suppose, I  
 have t'

t. if it be expected I  
 should

should submit my judgment to their *authority*, in this I beg leave to be *excused*. And, if those gentlemen have urged the *necessity* of a revelation, from the *insufficiency* of men's natural faculties to discover their duty, I must take the liberty to *dissent* from them, upon the *grounds* I have before laid down. As to the state of the *Pagan world*, this, I think, is plainly against them because the cause of the *Pagans* miscarriages, in matters of *religion*, was not the insufficiency of reason, but it was their *neglecting* and laying that *aside*, and giving themselves up to be conducted by *priests*, and *oracles*, and *pretended revelations*. Again,

*Thirdly*, The other error or fault of *defect*, supposed to follow, by consequence, from the fore mentioned error or fault of excess, is, that I ascribe *too little* to *divine assistance*, with respect to the practice of our duty. What I have said of this matter is mostly contained in my Examination of Mr. Barclay's Principles, and in my Reply to Mr. Beaven's Defence of him; wherein I have allowed "that God may sometimes kindly interpose, and  
"by a supernatural operation, bring to men's  
"view such useful truths, as they, thro' sloth,  
"bigotry, or some other impediment, are ignorant  
"of, or do not attend to: and likewise that God  
"may, by those operations, present such motives  
"to men's minds as are necessary to excite to good  
"actions, still leaving them perfectly at liberty  
"as moral agents, whether they will hearken to  
"and follow, or reject those wholesome counsels  
"as he, by such supernatural operations, or by  
"the written word, is pleased to lay before them."  
Page 4 of my Reply to Mr. Beaven. Thus far I have allowed; but this my *admonisher* complains of as *too little*: tho', I think, he is *mistaken*, because, if I had allowed more, it would have been *too much*; too much for man to remain a *moral agent*,  
or



or an *accountable* creature, or a proper object of *reward*, or *punishment*; seeing more than I have allowed above would have been inconsistent with *human liberty*. Every action in which man is properly a moral agent, for which he is accountable, and which renders him the proper object of reward or punishment, must, in the nature of the thing be the *effect* and *produce* of *man's will* and *agency*, and not of the will and agency of another. And, therefore, if more were ascribed to the *influence* of the *Spirit*, with respect to the performance of man's *duty*, than I have allowed above, it would be *too much*.

But, here, my *admonisher* returns upon me by observing, that I ascribe nothing to the Spirit, with respect to the *heart* and *affections* of men, which he looks upon to be the *main point*. By the heart and affections I understand the *same thing*; for if my *admonisher* means otherwise, then, I do not understand him. However, I shall consider the heart and affections as the same, the affections being supposed to be *seated in*, or to *spring from* that part of man's body, which is called the *heart*. The affections are to be consider'd, as *parts* and *branches* of the human composition, or as something which *flows* from it: and these are called into *exercise*, or into *being*, by *objects* from without, which are differently, and at different times, presented to the mind. And each affection is *stronger* or *weaker* from something different in the composition and constitution of each creature.

Thus, *love* and *hatred*, *hope* and *fear*, *joy* and *sorrow*, and the like, are either called into exercise, or into being, by objects from without, which either *strike* and *awaken* those affections, or else give being to them. And each of these affections is stronger, or weaker, according to the *constitution* of each creature, or as they have been check'd or indulg'd by that creature. One affection may  
likewise

likewise take place of, and *supplant* another opposite to it; thus, the same object which appears *agreeable* to day, and so excites the affection of *love* may to morrow, when taken in a different view, appear *disagreeable*, and excite the contrary affection, *viz. hatred*. And as the affections are excited by objects from without, so these objects are presented to the mind different ways, *viz. by the senses* by man's own *reflections*, by another *agent*, or the like. Thus, I may represent to a man the *evil* he will draw upon himself by the performance of this or that action; and this may awaken his *fear*, and be a *check* or *restraint* upon him, with regard to the performance of that action. And, in such a case, I may, in a *secondary* and *less proper* sense, be said to *influence* the man's heart and affections, and to work a *change* in him, when, in strictness of speech, I am no more than barely an *instrument*, in bringing those ideas or objects to his view, which, by his considering and reflecting upon them, were the *ground* and reason of his change. And, here, my reader will easily discern *how far* I allow the Spirit of God may work upon the hearts and affections of men, *viz. by bringing to their view* such objects as are proper to *excite* their *affections*, still leaving them as much at *liberty* to attend to, or reject what is thus offered. as they are, when those objects are presented to the mind any other *way*, or by any *other* agent or instrument. And, here, I conceive I do not ascribe *too little* to the spirit of God, with respect to the performance of man's duty, because, if I ascribe more, it will be *too much*. For if God should so far interpose, as to *raise* or *change* the affections of men, *abstractedly* from any *objects* from without, tho' this supposition is an *absurdity*, because every affection supposes some object which it is exercised upon, and suppose such affections are the *springs* of action in man, then, man is a  
mere

mere *machine*; he loves, and desires, and acts *he knows not what, nor why*; or rather, he does not love, nor desire, nor act *at all*, but some other agent loves, and desires, and acts *in him*. And, consequently, man is *not* a moral agent, is *not* accountable, is *not* a proper object of reward, or punishment, at least, in all those cases in which the Spirit of God *interposes*, as aforesaid. Besides, if the hearts and affections of men, by their *condition*, in nature are *evil*, which evil it was not in their power to *prevent*, nor to *free themselves* from; and if this evil exposes them to the *displeasure* of Almighty God, then, the case is the same to mankind, as if their *state* had been determined by an *absolute decree*. For as every man, from his condition in nature, must of course, be a *bad man*, except God *interposes* and changes his heart and affections; so every man, that is *bad*, would *become good*, if God would interpose and *change* his heart, as aforesaid. *Goodness* or *badness* in men, upon this principle, is not a matter of *choice* or *election* in them; but one man is bad *by* or *from* his condition in nature, and another is good *by God's interposing* and changing his heart and affections. But this *doctrine* reflects *great dishonour* upon our kind Creator, and, therefore surely, is not the truth of the case. Again,

*Fourthly*, My other error or fault of *excess* is, that I ascribe *too much* to *virtue, humanity, and charity*, with respect to God's favour and acceptance. And here, again, I shall take for granted the proposition I mentioned above, *viz. that God is absolutely wise and good*. This being allowed, it will follow, that he will not *love* nor *hate*, *reward* nor *punish* any person, upon any other account than his being the suitable and proper object of his *approbation*, or *aversion*; because to love or hate, reward or punish, upon any other *motive*,  
is

is wrong in it self, and is the effect of *weakness*, or *viciousness*, and therefore, is absolutely inconsistent with the character of the divine Being. The question, then, is, what is it that makes a man a *lovely creature*, and thereby renders him a proper object of *divine regard*? And this, I say, is virtue, humanity, and charity; or, in other words, it is the putting on *such* a temper of mind and *such* a behaviour, as *becomes* us as *men*, which renders us *worthy* of the favour of God. Man is a dependent creature, who owes himself and all his enjoyments to the *benevolence* of his kind Creator, to whom he cannot possibly make any grateful return of kindness again; so that the some of his duty to God is *love* and *thankfulness*, and this includes in it his duty to his neighbour, which is the *fulfilling of the law*; seeing true love and thankfulness to God consists in having a just sence of his *goodness* upon our minds, and in carefully using the *benefits* he bestow on us, to answer the *wise* and *good end* for which they were given, *viz.* the *common good*. The *common felicity*, and therein the *honour* and *glory of God*, is the *grand design* of the present system of things, and the great end which our kind Creator had in view, in calling this world into being. And as man was designed and constituted to be a *sharer* in, and a *contributer* to the common tranquility; so when he has such a *just sence* of his Creator's goodness, as becomes a *principle of action* in him, and disposes him carefully to use the *benefits* he receives, in answering the wise and kind purpose of the *benefactor*, by contributing to the well-being of the rest of his fellow-creatures, and by introducing as much *happiness* into the creation as he can; this is true *love*, true *thankfulness*, and is what will render him truly *lovely* and *valuable* in the sight of God. For tho' every virtuous good man ought, and will be ready,



on all proper occasions, *publickly* to acknowledge the benefits he receives, to the *praise* of the *donor*; yet these acknowledgments are not love or gratitude, but only the *outward marks* and *signs* of them, and which too often are separated from them. These acknowledgments, these *calves of our lips*, are no more than an *outward profession* of love and thankfulness, or, at most, the lower kind of *fruits* of them. By these acknowledgments we tell *Almighty God*, or rather *tell one another*, that we are loving and thankful. But these, considered *abstractedly*, are far from being love or thankfulness itself, because the *contrary* may take place in us, notwithstanding those professions. And, therefore, when a man has *such a sense* of his Creator's goodness upon his mind, as engages him to employ the benefits he receives, to answer the wise and good end for which they were given; this is true love and gratitude, and will render a man a thousand-fold more *valuable* in himself, and more acceptable to God, than all the most pompous numerous compliments which he can possibly pay to him. As to *prayer*, whether we consider it, as a solemn address to God for the good things we want, or for the continuance of those we already enjoy, whether, for the removing the evils we suffer, or for the preventing those we fear; in all those views, it is, strictly and properly, a *duty* we owe to *ourselves*, like as it is our duty to labour for our daily bread, and to use all proper means to procure the great end of being to ourselves, *viz.* our *present* and *future happiness*. And, therefore, as far as prayer is *subservient* to render us the proper objects of divine regard, by rendering us *worthy* of the benefits we pray for, and is a *means* to the obtaining of them; so far it is a *benefit* to us, and may, in a secondary and less proper sense, be said to render us *acceptable* to God;

I say, it *may* render us acceptable to God, not upon its own account, considered abstractedly, as prayer, but as it is a means to produce in us such a *temper* and *conduct*, as renders us truly lovely and valuable in the eyes of our Maker. Thus, I have shewn what I ascribe to *virtue*, *humanity*, and *charity*; and, I think, I did not ascribe *too much*, because, if I had ascribed less, it would have been *too little*; too little for God's *honour*, for if he does not *love* and *accept* the virtuous human charitable man, he cannot be a *wise* and a *good* being. Again,

*Fifthly*, One of the *faults* or *errors* of *desert* which I am charged with, and which is urged, by way of consequence, from the foregoing error or fault of excess, is, that I ascribe *too little* to *faith*. By *faith* I suppose my admonisher must mean an assent to this general proposition, *viz.* *that the christian revelation is of a divine original*; or else some particular proposition or propositions contained under that general, such as, that *Jesus is the Christ*, and the like. Upon which I observe, that *assent*, as it is simply an act or judgment of the mind arising from proper evidence, is the same, and renders a man equally valuable in *all cases*; because the *ground* of assent is not the goodness or badness, or the greater or less importance of the subject to which the proposition assented to relates, but only the *strength* of the evidence upon which the *truth* of the proposition depends, or is supposed to depend. But tho' assent, in all cases, is the same; yet the *truths* or propositions assented to may be very different, and of much greater concern to *mankind* in one case than in another. *That the whole is equal to all its parts* is a proposition of very little concern to mankind; but, that *good men will be happy*, and *bad men miserable in another world*, are propositions, the truth of which nearly concerns us all; because it lies upon us to

take all proper *measures* to guard against the one, and to *secure* the other, that is, to become *good men* ; seeing it is goodness which entitles us to the one, and secures us from the other. Now, so far as any revelation or any propositions contain'd in it are *subservient* to *goodness*, and do really dispose us to it ; so far *faith* in these propositions is *serviceable* to us, and, maytho' in an improper sense, be said to render us *acceptable* to God, not upon the account of any *intrinsic worth* or value in faith itself, considered as faith or an act of assent, but as it has been *subservient* to goodness ; which goodness alone, strictly speaking, is what renders us acceptable to our Maker ; because a good man will be equally *valuable* in himself, and *acceptable* to God, whether faith be introductive to his goodness, or not ; just as *health* will be equally valuable, whether it be procured or preserved by this or that means. And, therefore, as it is *right* to render to faith its due ; so, surely, it must be *wrong* to render to it more than its due. If the *belief* of a judgment to come has an influence upon my *temper* and *actions*, and changes them for the better, faith is *instrumentally* a benefit to me ; but if faith has no such influence, which influence depends upon my own will, then, it is of no advantage to me at all. And, in this case, if I am influenced and wrought upon, it is not faith, strictly speaking, but the *object of faith*, or the proposition or truth assented to, which is the *ground* and reason of my change ; and it is the *change itself*, and not the way and means by which it is brought about, that renders me *acceptable* to God. Thus, I have shewn what I ascribe to *faith* ; and, I think, I have not ascribed *too little*, because, if I had ascribed more, it would have been *too much*, as being more than it has a *title to*, or than the *scriptures* ascribe to it. For  
tho'

tho' faith is spoken of there with great *applause*, yet this was not, on the account of any *intrinsic* worth or value in the thing itself, but of that *virtue* and *goodness* which it was *highly subservient* to. The Bible, when it speaks of and considers faith, *abstractedly* from that influence which it sometimes has upon men's actions, pronounces it perfect *emptiness* or *nothing*. Thus, St. Paul faith of himself, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. *Tho' I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing*. And, here, I think, it may be justly presumed, that the faith of St. Paul was truly *orthodox*, and sufficiently *strong*, as being founded upon clear and convincing evidence; and yet St. Paul declares, that his *strong orthodox faith*, when considered *abstractedly*, was *nothing*; that is, it would not be of any service to him, with respect to the obtaining God's favour. Now, supposing the Apostle's words, in the text above, should be transposed, and be read thus, *And tho' I have all charity, and have no faith, I am nothing*; this, I think, would express my admonisher's principles. But, surely, it is not the *truth* of the case; for as charity is truly *valuable* in itself, so it disposes *Almighty God*, to *cover* or *overlook* a multitude of such *faults*, or rather *defects*, as the want of faith, at most, can reasonably be supposed to be. Again,

*Sixthly*, Another *error* or *fault* of *defect* charged upon me, and which is supposed to follow, by way consequence, from the last mentioned error of excess, is, that I ascribe *too little* to gospel-ordinances. And, here, I observe, that as experience abundantly shews mankind to be *much disposed* to ceremonies and external observances, there being something *pompius* in them which strikes and affects our senses; so in the *christian revelation* there is provision of this kind, by the appointment of a *few ceremonies* or institutions, which are *plain* and



*simple* in themselves, the *least burthensome*, and the *most instructive* to us ; and these are prescribed, not as *taxes* upon mankind, but to dispose them to *virtue* and *goodness* in the use of them, and to prevent their running into *burdensome* and *barifal superstitions* ; and, as far as they are *subservient* to these ends, so far they are *useful* and valuable to us, and, in an improper sense, may be said to render us *acceptable* to God, as they are subservient to that *virtue* and *goodness* which, in truth and reality, does so. And as every good man ought to attend on those, as means to *strengthen* and *establish* himself in virtue and goodness, and to preserve *decency* and *order* in the christian church ; so, on the other side, he ought not to make the use of these the *ground* of his confidence in *God's favour*, because it is not the use of them, considered abstractedly, but it is that *virtue* and *goodness*, to which these are subservient, that renders him acceptable to his Maker. Thus, I have shewn what I ascribe to *gospel-ordinances* ; and herein, I think, I have not ascribed *too little*, because, if I had ascribed more, it would have been *too much* ; by raising the value of these above their *worth*. and above the value which the *gospel* sets upon them. Thus, Gal. v. 6. *In Jesus Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, but faith, which worketh by, or is productive of, love.* Rom. ii. 25. *For circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the law ; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.* Which is as much as if the Apostle had said ; thou, being a Jew, valuest thyself upon thy being *circumcised* ; and, verily, whilst thy circumcision is an *argument* to thee to *keep the law*, and leads thee to the practice of thy *duty*, so far and in that respect, it is *profitable* to thee ; but if a *sense* of thy being *circumcised* has no such effect or influence upon thee, and thou, notwithstanding,

do'st

do'st *transgress* the *law*, then, it is the same to thee as if thou had'st not been circumcised. Thy being circumcised, considered *abstractedly* from the *influence* it might and ought to have upon thy actions, is of no value. And as this is the case, with respect to circumcision, which is allowed to be an ordinance of *divine institution*; so the case is the same, with respect to all other *institutions*. For as they are directed to some *good end*, so they are no farther valuable than as the *means* to that end; and no man is valuable for their sakes, but for the sake of that *goodness* which they are introductive to. Again,

*Seventhly*, and *lastly*, The other *error* or *fault* of *defect* charged upon me, and which is likewise supposed to follow from the above *error* or *fault* of excess, is, that I ascribe *too little* to the *death* and *sufferings of Christ*. Upon which I observe, that as Christ came on purpose to promote and set forward the *salvation of mankind*; so it was fit and proper that he should *do* and *suffer* whatever was necessary for the attainment of that valuable end. And as the laying down his life willingly and cheerfully, in this cause, was the *strongest proof* he could give that he was not an *imposter*, but was in earnest in what he pretended to; so it was proper that he should lay down his life, when called to it, and thereby give this *convincing evidence* of the *truth* and *importance* of that *testimony* which he then delivered to the world. And as he proposed to mankind the breaking off their sins by repentance, and returning to the love and practice of virtue and goodness, as the *only expedient* to restore them to *divine favour*; so his yielding up his present ease, pleasure, and profit, yea, and life itself, when it became subservient to the publick good, *which was his case*, was the most *lively* and *powerful example* and *pattern* of that *virtue* and *goodness*

which he recommended to, and pressed upon mankind. And as a sense of the death and sufferings of Christ, when consider'd in *both those views*, has a *tendency* to lead us to the love and practice of virtue and goodness; so when we are *wrought upon* by it, then, these may truly be said to be the *means* of our salvation; and we may, in an improper or figurative sense, according to the language of the *scripture*, be said to be *saved by them*; tho' strictly and properly, in this case, it is a man's virtue and goodness, which the sufferings and death of Christ may highly tend to promote, which is the *ground* of God's favour to him. Thus, I have shewed what I ascribe to the *sufferings and death of Christ*; and, I think, I have not ascribed *too little*, because, if I had ascribed more, it would have been *too much*; too much for God's *honour*, and more than the *truth* of the case will admit. For as the life, and sufferings, and death of one person, when considered *abstractedly*, cannot possibly render another person more or less *valuable* or *disagreeable*; so God will *love* or *hate*, *reward* or *punish* every man for what is *personally lovely* or *hateful in him*, and not for what is lovely or hateful in the person of another.

I am very sensible that the *ground of divine acceptance* is a point of the utmost concern to mankind, and that it ought to be handled with the greatest *caution* and *exactness*. And, therefore, as, on the *one side*, nothing ought to be *suppressed* which is *absolute necessary*, and which, for its *own sake*, renders men truly acceptable and well-pleasing to God; so on the *other side*, nothing ought to be *added* to, or made the *grounds* of divine acceptance, but what in truth and reality, does upon its *own account*, and for its *own sake*, render men the suitable and proper objects of divine regard: because every thing short of this is, at most, but *means* and *helps*

to that which is the ground of divine acceptance, and not the thing itself, and, therefore, ought never to be considered as such. Besides, the making those things the grounds of divine acceptance, which, in truth, are no more than means or helps to it, is of the most *dangerous consequence* to mankind; because this is to *sew pillows to all arm-holes*, and to lay a *false foundation for hope and comfort*, which vicious men are too apt to lay hold of. And this has been the case, in fact, with respect to those *very things*, which my admonisher has complained of. A multitude of *Christians*, who, tho' they have nothing valuable in themselves, to render them acceptable to God, yet think they can raile, from the abovemention'd *points*, some *solid grounds of comforts* to rest their souls upon. Thus,

Some men think they experience in themselves a *strong orthodox faith*, which they judge to be not only a *just ground* of confidence, but sometimes it swells up into an *assurance* of God's favour, tho' this is *too weak* a foundation for such a superstructure to rest upon. Faith, so far as it is the *means* of our salvation, that is, subservient to make men *wise and good*, so far it is highly, *beneficial* to them, and ought to be esteemed and acknowledged as such; but, then, it ought by no means to be set upon a *level* with that wisdom and goodness to which it is *instrumentally subservient*; because as that is very *wrong* in itself, so it has a tendency to *mislead and betray mankind*. Again,

Some men think that, by their *serious and constant attendance* upon *gospel-ordinances*, they render themselves approveable in the sight of God; and, as they think, experience in themselves the *Spirit of God moving upon the troubled waters of their hearts*; and from hence, as from the *wells of salvation*, they draw forth that *comfortable cordial*, viz. an *assurance*



*assurance*, or, at least, a *good hope*, as they think, of Gods favour; whereas, in truth, *this is forsaking the fountain of living water, viz.* that *virtue* and true *goodness* which alone will render us acceptable to our Maker, and *beewing out to ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns which can hold no water*; that is, it is laying in a *false foundation* of comfort to ourselves. Gospel ordinances were intended to *lead men* to, and to *establish* them in virtue, as I observed above; and, when they are used in such a way, as to be subservient to this end, they are highly useful to us, and ought to be considered as such; but, then, they ought not to be *valued*, and put upon an *equal foot* with that *end* to which they are only a means; because, as this is not the *truth* of the case, so it tends to the *hurt* and *damage* of mankind, by laying a false foundation of hope and comfort, as I observed above. Again,

Some men render a *vicious course of life* easy to themselves, and presume that they are *beloved* and *accepted* of God, on the account of the *life*, and *death*, and *resurrection of Christ*; and this, when added to either or to both the forementioned ground of comfort, fills them with all *joy* and *peace* in themselves; whereas it is *morally* as *impossible* for God to love and value any person, upon any other account than is being truly lovely and valuable in himself, as it is for him to be a *weak* or a *vicious* being. The sufferings and death of Christ were instances of the most *exalted virtue*, and of his exceeding great *love* and *goodwill* to mankind; and, therefore, the *memory* of them ought to be *perpetuated* with the utmost *respect* and *thankfulness* by us. And as far as a *sense* of the life, and sufferings, and death of Christ, has an *influence* upon our tempers and actions, so far it is the *means* of our *salvation*, as I observed above, and ought to be considered as such. But, then,

then, the life, and sufferings, and death of Christ considered *abstractedly* from the *influence* which a *sense* of these may, and ought to have upon our tempers and actions, cannot possibly be a *just ground* of confidence in God's favour; because it is not these, but something which is *personally valuable* and *pleasing* in us, which must render us acceptable and well-pleasing to God. And, therefore, these are not, strictly speaking, the *grounds* of divine acceptance, nor ought to be consider'd; because as such a representation is *wrong*, so it had been exceedingly *pernicious* to mankind.

Upon the whole, if my admonisher had thought that faith, gospel-ordinances, and the sufferings and death of Christ, were proper to be considered and treated of, as *means* of our *salvation*, in the *sense* in which I have shewn they are; and if he had judged that such a performance would have been *useful* to *mankind*, he was at liberty to have treated of this subject, as largely as he pleased, in a *discourse* of his own; and so might have *supplied* every defect which he *imagined* he had discovered in mine. But, then, this would not have *justified* his *groundless* complaints against me, because I did not undertake to shew, what is in a *remote sense*, but what is *directly* and *immediately*, and *for its own sake*, the *ground* of divine acceptance? And if my admonisher judged that faith, gospel-ordinances, and the sufferings and death of Christ, are *directly* and *immediately* the grounds of divine favour, that is, that these do, *upon their own account*, and not on the account of that *influence* they have upon men's tempers and actions, render them acceptable to God: I say, if he judged this to be the case, which, I think, he must, or else his complaints were *trifling*; then, surely, he is *mistaken* in a point of the greatest concern,

cern, and which has been most *pernicious to mankind*, as I have shewn above.

Thus, Sir, I have gone thro' your *Admonition*, and have taken a short view of the several points *complained* of in it, presuming I shall be *acquitted* of the charge laid against me by every *discerning, impartial, and unprejudiced* judge. And, to conclude this Letter, I beg the favour, that, if you have any more admonitions in store for me, you would be pleased to put your *name* to them, that so we may be upon an *equal foot*. And tho' you have laid hold of every *trifling* occasion, to justify your negative but groundless charge, and have *suggested and insinuated* several things of me, which are not *just, nor friendly*, but perfectly *unkind*; yet as I take the admonition, upon the whole, to be the produce of your *pious* but misguided zeal, and to be intended for *mine* and the *publick good*, so I, again, return you my *bearty thanks*, and crave leave to subscribe myself,

S I R,

Your obliged humble Servant,

T H O. C H U B B.



TRACT

## T R A C T XXXI.

A few Things humbly offered to the  
Consideration both of *Believers* and  
*Unbelievers*, in these happy Days of  
Liberty of Enquiry.

**W**E of this *age* and *nation* enjoy many privileges and advantages, which other ages and nations have been strangers to. One of which is a *liberty of enquiry* into matters of *religion*. For tho' men's professing their opinions freely, in some points, may be contrary to the *laws* of this *kingdom*, and though there may be some among us, who *wish* to see the laws rigorously executed upon their neighbours, in this respect; yet these are under a proper and a happy *restraint*, by the just and wise administration of the present government. Surely, nothing can be more *unjust* or *unreasonably assuming*, than for any man, or body of men, to take upon them to *direct* and *govern* the understandings and consciences of others, in matters of *religion*; that is, in matters relating to the *favour* of *God*. For as religion is purely *personal*, and every man must be answerable for himself to *God*; so every man must, in reason, have a *right* to judge for himself, in all matters pertaining thereto; and, consequently, it must be *just* and *reasonable* in our governours, to *indulge* their subjects in the enjoyment of that right. And as such indulgence is just and reasonable in itself, so it is most certainly *wise* and *politick*. For when the people of any nation are *made* or *suffered* to afflict and persecute one another, for religious matters, in which the good, or  
harm,



hurt, of the community is not concerned, then the *strength* and *power* of that nation is employed to *weaken* and *destroy* itself ; as such division, enmity, and opposition, in any nation, naturally tend to its dissolution. However, this is not our case, *persecution* being an evil which our governors *have*, and, I trust, *will* carefully guard against. But,

Tho' a liberty of enquiry is kindly indulged, yet we do not see all the *good effects* which might be expected from it ; and especially with respect to the *grand question* betwixt the *Believers* and the *Unbelievers* ; this being a time, in which one might hope to see that question fully and clearly discussed, every objection and difficulty fairly removed, and truth settled upon the most solid and lasting foundation ; which, I think, as yet, does not appear to be the case, each party being too apt to *wander* from the subject, and to endeavour the *exposing* each other more than the discovery of truth. The Unbeliever, instead of fairly proposing his own objections, is too apt to fish after the *weak* and *absurd* things, which have been at any time said by *Believers*. And as this becomes a ground of *triumph* to him, so hereby he awakens the *passions* of some, and gives occasion for *laughter* and *diversion* to others. But, surely, the christian religion is not answerable for all the *wild* and *extravagant* things, which any of its professors have put upon it ; and, therefore, I think it *unfairly* urged by the Unbelievers, and to be an *abuse* of that liberty, which they are kindly indulged in. Whether *prophecy*, *miracles*, or such other topicks, as are urged to prove the *divinity* of the christian revelation, do, when fairly and impartially examin'd and consider'd, *prove* or make good that proposition, is the question betwixt the Believers and Unbelievers : and, therefore, if the  
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Unbelievers would shew the *weakness* of those grounds, upon which that proposition is founded, they ought to confine themselves to the question before them, and not introduce that into the case, which is foreign to it. I grant, that the Unbelievers are under a very great difficulty, in the present case; because, if they should be *open* and *frank* in declaring their opinions and objections, they are not *sure* they shall not fall under a *prosecution*. But, then, tho' this may be proper ground to act with *caution*, in order to guard against any evil which such freedom may expose them to; yet, surely, it cannot be any ground for *trifling* in argument, or to minister occasion for *diversion*, in a question which ought to be treated of with the utmost seriousness. Believers are likewise too apt to *wander* out of their way, and to fish after the *personal faults* of the *Unbelievers*; and, from hence, they raise a battery against *infidelity*; and will have it that unbelief, with respect to the *divinity* of the christian revelation, is not the result of a *free enquiry*, but the produce of *vicious inclinations*; and that men chuse to be *Infidels*, in order to get rid off those *restraints* and *reluctancies*, which otherwise they would be liable to. This, I think, is using the Unbelievers exceedingly *unkind* and *ill*, as if what was true of some must be *justly chargeable* upon all; and as if a man could not be an Unbeliever, that is, in common language, a *Deist*, but he must be destitute of all *honour* and *conscience*, *virtue* and *religion*; whereas *Deism* is not *subversive* of these, but perfectly consistent with them. And, if I am not misinform'd, the thing is *false*, in *fact*; that is, there are many *Deists* who are men of strict honour, virtue, and religion. And,

As Believers and Unbelievers are thus using each other *ill*; so hereby they alienate their *affections*

tions from each other, inflame one another's *passions*, stir up *resentment*, and bar up the way to that *kindness*, *friendship*, and *brotherly love* to each other, which are essential to, and are some of the most principal parts of true religion. And, if any thing farther were in their power, it is to be feared they would not stop here, but would go into all those instances of cruelty and persecution, which others have practised. This is what some men shew *too strong* an inclination to, tho', by the blessing of a good government, they are happily *restrained*. But this is not all ; for, whilst the Believers and Unbelievers are thus *playing* upon each other, they minister occasion to men of *gay tempers* and *little reflection*, to throw up the whole, as an *amusement*, and to consider it only, as a proper subject for *laughte*r and *ridicule* ; for when they see so much wrangling about the *grounds* of *divine revelation*, which they consider as the *grounds* of *religion*, tho' these are as distinct and different, as two things can be, and so little certainty on either side, for any thing that appears to them, then they are too easily led to think, that religion has no *solid foundation* ; that it only serves the purposes of *crafty* and *designing* men ; and that is right for them to give a *loose* to their appetites and desires, and to gratify every vicious inclination. This, I fear, is too much the truth of the case ; that, whilst men are contending about the *divinity* of the christian revelation, *religion itself* is wearing out of the world ; men either *throw it up*, or else exert such zeal in its favour as is *subversive* of it. And, therefore, I think, it cannot be amiss, but rather suitable and proper, to remind mankind, that whatever *difficulty* or *perplexity* may attend revelation, which may minister occasion for dispute, their *religious* obligations are the same. For, supposing the *divinity* of a revelation to be most ma-  
nifest

*manifest and clear*, the Believers *moral obligations* must be the same, as if it manifestly appear'd to be *otherwise*; because those obligations are *antecedent* to, and *independent* of such a revelation; and, consequently, the case must be the same, with respect to the *Unbelievers* also. And as this is a matter which equally concerns them both, so I beg leave to offer a few things to their consideration. I shall not enter into the question or point in controversy betwixt them, but only make such *reflections* as are *equally just*, whether this or that revelation be of a divine original, or not. And,

*First*, I observe, that whatever *uncertainty* may attend any revelation, yet it makes no alteration, with respect to *true religion*, that not being a precarious thing founded on *arbitrary pleasure*, and thereby liable to perpetual change and alteration, but on the *moral fitness* of things; and, therefore, must be the same yesterday, to day, and for ever. For as *duty* necessarily supposes an *intelligent being*, who is naturally qualified to discern and judge of *good and evil*, or that moral fitness and unfitness which arises from the nature and the relations of things, and likewise a *power and liberty* of acting one way, or the other; so the duty, which lies upon such a creature, must necessarily consist in acting agreeably to the *nature* and the *relations* of things, as aforesaid. And whoever takes an impartial view of *human nature* will see, that man is a creature excellently constituted to answer the purposes of *social felicity*, and to promote and carry on a common happiness; all his appetites and passions, when rightly directed and kept within due bounds, so as that one is not indulged to the depressing of another, *lead to this end*, by rendering man, upon the whole, an *agreeable* and an *useful creature*. His understanding likewise qualifies him not only to direct and govern his appetites

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and passions, but also shews him the *fines* of a common good, and the intrinsic *excellency* and *valuableness* of pursuing it.

Man being thus constituted, it will be easy to know, what his duty must certainly be ; *namely*, to put on such a *temper* of *mind*, and such a *behaviour*, as is suitable to, and becoming such a creature ; or, in other words, it is, *first*, to live under a *grateful sense* of that *goodness*, which God hath shewn, in calling a multitude of creatures into being, on purpose to communicate happiness to them ; and in a wise and kind provision of all things necessary to make them so. And, *secondly*, man's duty consists in a *generous* and *steady* prosecution of that *grand design*, viz. the *common felicity*, by rendering himself an agreeable and an useful creature, and thereby introducing as much *happiness* into the creation as he is capable of doing ; enjoying the blessings of life in such a way, as is *consistent* with, and *conducive* to the common tranquillity, and denying himself every pleasure which comes in *competition* with, or is *destructive* of the common felicity. And,

As man is a creature designed and constituted to taste of, and propagate a common happiness ; so, when he answers that end, by *promoting* the peace and comfort, the happiness and well-being of all around him, and *contributes* to the common felicity, as much as in his power ; as he, then, becomes a valuable and a lovely creature, so, of course, he will be accepted and approved of God. And, on the other side, if he *viciously monopolizes* the blessings and comforts of life to himself, and *covetously* pursues his own pleasures and desires, when they are *destructive* of the happiness of others, and stand in *opposition* to the common felicity ; as, in this case, he commences a disagreeable and a hurtful creature ; so he will be displeasing and  
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Wile in the eyes of his Maker. And as our duty arises from what we are, so it must continue *perpetually* and *invariably* the same, whilst we continue to be such creatures. Revelation cannot *add* to, nor *diminish* our duty, because it does not alter our composition; and, consequently, whatever difficulty, or uncertainty, may attend any revelation, this ought not to be the ground of *Libertinism*, or the foundation of *uneasiness* to us; seeing our duty may easily be discovered without it, and seeing *true religion* and our *obligations* are the same, whether this or that revelation be of a *divine* original, or not. Again,

*Secondly*, I observe, that tho' Believers and Unbelievers *differ* in opinion from each other, yet such difference in sentiments does not *alter* their compositions, nor constitute them *two* distinct species of beings; but, on the contrary, they still continue to be *men*, notwithstanding their differing in opinion, as aforesaid. And, therefore, it is highly just and reasonable, and their bounden duty, to act a part towards each other, and towards all men, as is *suitable* to, and *becoming* human nature, and to preserve and maintain their *manly character*. Surely, nothing can be more absurd than to suppose, that we are to put off *humanity*, in order to become *religious*. And yet it is too common for persons to commence creatures of *prey*, by biting and devouring one another, in order to exert their religious *zeal*, and to shew that they are *religious* men. Alas! we are cast into an age full of complaints of all kinds; and those which relate to religion, I imagine, are not the fewest. And, among these, some complain of the mighty growth of *scepticism* and *infidelity*, and others of the prevalency of *bigotry*, *superstition*, and *enthusiasm*. Now, whether these complaints are *well* or *ill* grounded, on either side, is  
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what I shall not enquire into. All I shall observe is, that as men are apt to exert a *bitter zeal* in these cases, so they are likewise apt to *value* that zeal at too high a rate, by considering it, as that which will render them truly acceptable and well-pleasing to God; but, surely, this must be a mistake. For as divine revelation is given by God to men, on purpose to lead them into the *love* and *practice* of virtue and true goodness, by laying down such *rules* of action, as were their duty, independent of, and antecedent to that revelation, by representing to them the *consequences* of a good and bad life, with regard to divine favour, or displeasure, and by appointing a *form* of *worship*, to prevent contention and discord, and to preserve peace and unity amongst mankind; so, where that end is answered, by the love and practice of *virtue* and true *goodness*, such men will be accepted and approved of *God*, whether divine revelation be *introductive* to it, or not. And where that end is not answered, but men continue in the love and practice of *vice* and *wickedness*, such men will not be approved, tho' they believe divine revelation ever so strongly; *faith* and *infidelity*, in the present case, being no other than the *giving* or *withholding* our assent to a proposition, *viz. that this or that revelation is of a divine original*; neither of these, therefore, can be any farther valuable, than as they are the proper result of that evidence, or the want of it, upon which each of them is grounded. Faith, strictly speaking, does not *add* to our duty; and infidelity cannot *take* from it. And, therefore, to exert a bitter zeal, on either side, as it is *unreasonable* in itself, so it cannot be *acceptable* to our Maker. All, I think, which can fairly be done in the present case, and which will become us, as reasonable creatures, is to propose with *decency*, and in the best light it can be put



put, all that can be said on either side of the question; to examine it with *care* and *freedom*; to shew, in the spirit of meekness, what appears to us *defective* in what has been thus offered, and then to leave each other to that conviction, which such *evidence*, or the *want* or *seeming* want of it, shall produce in each other's mind; still remembering that our duty, strictly speaking, is not affected by it.

Let not, then, the Unbeliever *despise* the Believer, nor the Believer *judge* the Unbeliever; for if neither of them answer their *manly character*, neither of them will be approved; and, if both of them act the part of *good* and *virtuous* men, God will receive them both. Rather let them *bear* with, and *forbear* one another in love. For as in all questions which do not admit of absolute certainty, and which, I think, is the present case, it is great odds, but some will *err*; so such errors cannot, in the nature of the thing, be a proper foundation for *resentment*. The different abilities, improvements, and opportunities of different persons, and the various ways in which men are capable of being *biased*, that is, of leaning to one side of a question, rather than to the other; these lay a foundation for error. And as, in all questions of this kind, a man ought to be *modest* in his assumptions, seeing he is *liable* to mistake; so, for that reason, he ought to treat *decently* and *civilly* all that differ from him, as knowing that error, in *such cases*, is what all men are liable to. The Unbeliever too often looks down upon Believers with an eye of *scorn* and *contempt*, and despises them, as persons who are under the power of *superstition* and *bigotry*, and who have captivated their understandings to the will of designing *priests*. On the other side, the Believer *magisterially* denounces the judgments of heaven upon



upon the Unbelievers, and considers them, as *enemies* to God and all that is good, and as men whom *lust* and *sin* have blinded, that they cannot see the truth. But, wherefore all this? Surely, which side soever of the question is right, such a conduct must be *wrong*, and highly displeasing to that *God*, who has a common concern for the good of us all. Would it not be more *decent* and *candid* for the Unbeliever to think with himself, that tho' he is not convinced by the evidence proposed, yet others may? and that, therefore, it must be as *right* for them to *give* assent, as it is for him to with-hold it? and that as men's judgments are capable of being misled by *education*, *authority*, *vulgar opinion*, and the like, so they do not discern the *delusion* themselves, and that others cannot be judges for them; and, therefore, it becomes a man to be rather *jealous* of himself, in these respects, than to charge them, at all adventures, upon his opponents? And, would it not be alike *candid* and *becoming* for the Believer to consider, that evidence does not appear alike *conclusive* to all persons? and, therefore, if he is so happily discerning as to see the *strength* and *conclusiveness* of an argument, when the other does not, that, then, the other ought to be object of his *pity*, but not of his *censure* or *contempt*? and that tho' men's judgments are as liable to be misled by their *vicious inclinations*, as by any other cause; yet as this is what they are not qualified to *discover*, with regard to other men, so it must be exceeding *wrong* in them to charge that upon another, which they cannot be judges of, and of which they ought rather to think the contrary? I would, therefore, request both *Believers* and *Unbelievers* to consider themselves and each other, as *men*, and to treat one another accordingly. I likewise beg leave to remind them, that they are crea-  
tures

tures constituted and appointed to contribute to, and to promote *each other's happiness*; and that it is not their different apprehensions, in any point, which can *lessen*, or *take off*, this obligation; and as the only end of our being is, that we, and the rest of our fellow-creatures, might be *happy*, so it is a very *wrong* way to secure the happiness of *another life*, by making *ourselves*, or *others*, miserable in *this*. He that contributes most to the common felicity *here*, whether he be a Believer, or an Unbeliever, bids fairest for happiness *hereafter*. And he that does his utmost, to obstruct the *tranquillity* of this world, is the most *unworthy* of, and the most *unlikely* to obtain the happiness of another.

But, farther, I beg leave, *thirdly*, to offer a word of *caution* to both sorts. To Believers my request is, that they would take heed, lest their *faith* prove a *snare* to them. Alas! how common is it for a *Few* to value himself, because he is such; and so of all other religious parties in the world. How easy is it for a man who spends his *time*, his *strength*, his *zeal* in a cause, which he considers, as the *cause* of *God*, to think that these will render him acceptable to his Maker? Whereas, if these are separated from *true goodness*, that is, from a true regard to the *present* as well as *future happiness* and well-being of the rest of his fellow-creatures; then, it is morally impossible that he should be so, seeing there is nothing which can render us *valuable* in the sight of God, but our acting a *worthy* and a *manly* part. Our rendering ourselves *agreeable creatures*, by acting conformably to our composition, is that, and *that only*, which will render us *acceptable* to the Author of it. Let not, then, a *strong persuasion* of the truth of divine revelation, and a *zealous* contending for it, blind our eyes, by leading us to think

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that these, or any thing short of *personal* virtue, will render us worthy of divine regard ; but let us endeavour to answer the great end of all *divine revelation*, which is to make us *good creatures*, by acting a part suitable to, and becoming our rational and manly nature ; and then we shall not fail of God's favour. Again, my request to the Unbeliever is, that he would take heed, lest his *infidelity* lead him to *Libertinism*. Alas ! how easy is it for him to *split* upon this *rock* ! for when he sees that the generality of men make revelation the *only ground* of religion ; and when he judges that the *divinity* of that revelation has no *solid foundation*, he is then in danger of drawing this *false conclusion* from those premises, *namely*, that he is under *no religious obligation* at all ; and, consequently, that he is perfectly at *liberty* to gratify every vicious inclination. I would, therefore, beg leave to remind him, that however the case may stand, with regard to the *divinity* of this or that revelation, yet this makes no *alteration*, with regard to *true religion*. He is a *man* ; and, from hence, his *religious obligations* arise. He is a *moral agent*, who is excellently constituted to promote and carry on a *common happiness* ; and, therefore, it must and will be his *duty*, to put on such a temper of mind, and such a behaviour, as is *suitable* to, and *becoming* such a creature. But, farther,

Let me entreat both Believers and Unbelievers not to *play upon*, and *sport* themselves with each other's *weakness*, but rather in a decent and manly way endeavour the removing it, and, if that cannot be done, to cover it with the *mantle of love*. It is true, *ridiculous* things are and will be the *objects* of *ridicule* ; but, then, it ought to be remembered, that the proper end of ridicule is, in a way of *pleasantry*, to convince the judgments of those  
men,

men, who would not be so easily convinced, in a way of *grave argument*. For, when they see that the *fool's coat* is the natural dress of their *opinions* or *practices*, this gives them a *jealousy* that there is some defect in the arguments that convince them, which jealousy otherwise they would not have. I say, the proper end of *ridicule* is to *convince the judgment*, and thereby to remove the *ridiculous object*; and not to awaken resentment, and inflame the passions; and, therefore, every man, who practises in this way, ought to take care, that, if possible, the *proper end* of ridicule may be answer'd by it.

To conclude this head; give me leave to repeat what I have already so often observed, *namely*, that our *different* apprehensions, in any point, cannot possibly *cancel* the obligation we are under to *love* and *do good* to each other; much less will it *justify* or *excuse* any inhuman action. For as our religious obligations arise from our being *men*, so they must and will remain upon us, whilst we continue to be such. I will only add, that we are *men*, and, as such, our understandings are liable to be *misled*; and if error is a proper foundation for *resentment*, which, surely, it is not, then, let him that is *free* cast the first stone. Again,

*Fourthly and lastly*, I beg leave to remind the *Unbelievers*, that however the case may stand, with regard to the *divinity* of this or that revelation, yet the *solid grounds* of a *future judgment* and *retribution* are the same; and, therefore, their *rational hopes* and *fears*, arising from the expectation of such a judgment and retribution, ought not to be *weakened* or *destroyed* by it. Man is an *intelligent free creature*, who is naturally qualified to discern and judge of good and evil, and to direct his actions accordingly; and, consequently,  
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he is capable of *promoting* or *hindering* the common happiness, by rendering himself an agreeable and useful, or a disagreeable and hurtful creature. Now, if it is *right* and *fit* in the nature of the thing, when such a creature has acted his part in life, and is gone off the stage of action, that God should call him to an *account* for his conduct, and render to him the due reward of his deeds in another state, which, surely, will be granted; then, a future judgment and retribution will *most certainly* take place, because God will always most certainly do what is *right* and *fit* in the nature of things, and, consequently, future rewards and punishments are as *evident*, and as *certain*, from the nature of the thing, to all those who *see* the fitness of such a conduct, as any divine revelation can declare, or prove them to be. And that the *fitness* of *rewards* and *punishments* is seen and allow'd by men of all *capacities*, *nations*, and *religions*, is evident from hence, *viz.* that when any of these repose a *trust* in any other person, whom they have a dominion over, they judge it right and fit to call the trustee to an *account*, and likewise to shew their *favour* or *displeasure* to him, according as he has *rightly* employ'd or *abused* the trust lodged in his hand, and as that trust has been of greater or less importance to themselves, or others; which, I think, is an evident *proof*, that *all mankind* are capable of discerning, and must allow the fitness of future rewards and punishments, seeing nothing is more natural and easy to be discerned, than that what men are, and have, is a *trust* lodged with them, by the Maker of all things, to be employ'd for the *common good*; and, consequently, that they are, and will be *answerable* for that trust. And,

For the farther illustration of this point, I beg leave to take a short view of the *present system* of things,

things, and of the gracious *design* of our Creator in calling them into being; that hereby I may vindicate the divine conduct, in *rewarding* men of virtue and honour, with a plentiful share of happiness in another state, and in his *barring* vicious men from the enjoyment of that happiness, and plunging them into unspeakable misery. God is a Being absolutely *wise* and *good*; and as he is the Author and fountain of being to all others, so his sole end, in creating all things, was, that he might *introduce* and *promote* a *common happiness*. To have made a world, without that view, might have shewn the power, but not the wisdom and goodness of the Creator. Whereas, to make a world, for the sake of a common happiness, and to make a provision of all things necessary and conducive to that happiness; this discovers the perfection of *wisdom* and *goodness*. And as it bespeaks a large extent of knowledge and power, so it shews them to be *rightly employed*, by making them subservient to the *best* of purposes. And this is plainly the case of the *present system* of things, in which God has not only exerted his knowledge and power, in such a *manner*, and to such a *degree*, as exceed all *human conception*; but he has likewise display'd his wisdom and goodness most *conspicuously*, by disposing the whole, as *best* serves the purposes of a common felicity. The good of the whole is the *grand design*; and as every individual capable of happiness is intended to be a *sharer* in it, so each and every one are intended to be *contributors* to it. Every species of *vegetables* and every tribe of *animals*, each in their place, order, and time, being designed either *actively*, or *passively*, to be subservient to the *common good*. And

As man is made the chief or principal inhabitant of this globe, so he is qualified to have a *larger share* of felicity on it than any other animal,

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For as he has, in common with the creatures below him, those appetites and passions, which dispose them to all sensual enjoyments ; so he is better qualified for *procuring* those enjoyments, for guarding against the *loss* of them, for laying in a provision for their *continuance*, and for the *heightning* the pleasures which arise from them. And as man is thus qualified to taste the pleasures arising from sense ; so there are other pleasures provided for him to enjoy, which the rest of the animal world, as far as we can discern, have no taste or relish of. He is qualified to drink plentifully of the cup of *intellectual delight*, if I may so call it, by taking a view of the material world with its inhabitants ; by contemplating upon the *nature*, the *relations*, the *beauty*, and *order* of things ; by looking forward and backward, and seeing a long chain of *causes* and *effects* ; by taking a view of his *own* frame and composition, and of the frame and composition of the rest of the *animal* and *vegetable* world, with their *dependence* upon, and the *relation* they bear to each other ; yea, he can extend his view beyond this globe to the other planets, and consider them, with regard to their *different magnitudes*, *motions*, *densities*, *distances*, and the like. In short, he can indulge himself abundantly in this kind of pleasure, by ranging to and fro thro' the immense space, if I may so call it, of *natural truth*, each part of which affords materials for delight. Man is likewise qualified to see things in a *moral* view, and thereby to taste pleasures, which are of a more noble and exalted nature than those abovemention'd. He is capable of viewing the present system of things, consider'd as a *scheme* laid out for *happiness* ; in which not only the knowledge and power, but likewise the wisdom and goodness of God are amply display'd. He can see, and delight himself in seeing, how each species of beings be-  
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comes *subservient* to the common good; how each tribe of *animals* is qualified for and disposed to pleasure, and the provision which is made for their enjoyment of it. And as man is thus qualified for delight, by taking a view of the kind purposes of his Creator; so he can *contribute* to his own happiness, by *promoting* and carrying on the same design. He can every day *add* to and increase his own delight, by every day adding to and increasing the *felicity* and happiness of others. Add to this the pleasures which arise from *relation, friendship*, and the like: From all which, I think, it abundantly appears, that man is qualified for a more plentiful share of happiness than any other animal. And

As man is thus *interested* in the common felicity, so he is qualified to contribute *largely* to it, by conducting his *own* actions, and directing and governing the *creatures* below him, in such a manner as will be most *subservient* to the common good. He can *indulge* or *controul* his appetites and passions, as his own happiness and the happiness of his fellow-creatures *arise from* and *depend* upon it. He can employ the *member* of his body and the *faculties* of his soul, in ministring assistance, succour, comfort, and delight, to the rest of his fellow-creatures. He can provide for, direct, govern, and use the animals below him, in such a way as will be most for *their's* and for the *happiness of mankind*. In short, man is capable of rendering himself an agreeable and an useful creature, and of contributing *largely* to the common tranquillity. And

As man is thus qualified to promote a common happiness, so he is likewise qualified to *see* the moral fitness of such a conduct. Man is endowed with a faculty of *understanding*, which qualifies him to see things in a *moral* view, as I observ'd above;



above; and as happiness is the *desire* of every living thing, so every man must see that every creature has equally a *title* to it, whilst its happiness is *consistent* with the publick good. And as there is a provision made for the happiness of the *whole*, so, in the nature of the thing, it must be *intended* for the whole. And as every individual is only a *part* of that whole, so his *interest* in, and his *title* to happiness, can only be such as is *common* to the rest of his fellow-creatures. And as man is qualified to have a *large* share of the common felicity, so it is highly reasonable that he should *contribute as largely* to it; yea, as happiness is a *natural good*, so it must be right and fit, in the nature of thing, to *communicate* it according to our power, tho' we have no other interest in it, but the *pleasure* which arises from that communication. And as the happiness of the *whole* is, in the nature of the thing, preferable to the happiness of an *individual*; so the latter ought, in reason, to give *place* to the former; and, consequently, it is right and fit that every individual, who is qualified to *see* that fitness, should *deny* himself, when his own and the common happiness come in *competition*. And

As virtue consists in communicating happiness, to the *suitable subjects* of it; so it is the height and perfection of *virtue* and *goodness*, to deny ourselves, for the sake of the publick. And as every man cannot but see, if he will reflect upon it, that the publick good is the *principal* object of his care, and that he ought steadily to pursue it, and make his own *private interest* submit to it; so it is the height of *generosity*, and, therefore, will render him truly *valuable* and most *acceptable* to his Maker. And as this is the case of every *virtuous* person, in a greater or a less degree; so it most certainly becomes the *wisdom* and *goodness* of God,

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to shew his *respect* for, and manifest his *love* to such persons, by amply rewarding their *merits* with a plentiful share of *happiness* in another world, and by filling them with delights, which infinitely surpass all present enjoyments. For as, in the present state of things, there is no *discrimination* of persons, no manifestation of divine *love*, or *hatred*, from any thing that comes before us ; but one event happens to all, whether *virtuous*, or *vicious* ; all move on according to the general frame and constitution of things, being under the direction of those *laws* by which the natural world is governed ; so, surely, it must be worthy of, and suitable to the character of *perfect goodness*, for God to take a time *hereafter* to manifest his love and respect to those persons, who, by their *benevolent* and *virtuous* behaviour, have rendered themselves the suitable and proper objects of it. Those who have thus *freely* and *generously* contributed to the good and benefit of the rest of their fellow-creatures, and have occasion'd as much *happiness* in the world, as their condition and circumstance in life rendered them capable of, and thereby justly *merited* the love and benevolence of all, are, surely, worthy of the *divine favour*, and of that recompence of reward, which perfect goodness and absolute power are *enabled* and *disposed* to bestow upon them. These are they who speak their Creator's *praise*, by answering the *kind* purpose of their creation ; and, therefore, it highly becomes the great Governour of the universe to do them *honour*, by giving them a kingdom which cannon be moved, and a crown of glory and happiness which fadeth not away. And

As man is thus qualified to become a virtuous and a lovely creature, and thereby to *enlarge* his own *felicity* ; so he is capable of the *contrary*. He can, not only neglect, but, be *injurious* to the common

mon happiness. He can *oppose*, and, as far as his power extends, can *frustrate* the kind purpose of his Creator, and can set himself as a *bar* to the common tranquility; he can *injure* and *oppress* those of his fellow-creatures, whom he ought to *protect* and *defend*; he can *afflict* and *grieve* those whom he ought to *cherish* and *comfort*, and can make those hearts *sad* to whom he ought to minister *joy* and *delight*; he can *destroy* and *lay waste*, when he ought to *build* and *plant*, and can *cut off* those lives which he ought to *preserve*. In short, he can become a *disagreeable* and a *hurtful* creature, and can render himself a *common enemy* to the common happiness of mankind. And, when this is the case, which is so in a greater or less degree with every *vicious* person, then they become the proper objects of *divine reprobation*, and of the heavy displeasure of *Almighty God*. For as God cannot but *love* and *approve*, and will *reward* all persons of virtue and goodness; so he cannot but *hate* and *dislike*, and will *severely punish* all such vicious persons, as aforesaid. For when men not only deprive their fellow-creatures of that happiness in this life, which they are qualified for, and have a title to enjoy, but also *unjustly* load them with *unhappiness* and *misery*; then it becomes that wise and good Being, in whose hands they are, to *deprive* them of the felicity of another world, and to plunge them into *unspeakable misery*.

I shall not enter into those questions, *viz.* Of what *kind* or *degree*, or of what *duration* that punishment will be, which is to be inflicted upon vicious person in another world? These must be left to the *wisdom* of a divine hand to adjust. But this, I say, that those who have been so exceedingly *unkind* and *cruel*, as *unjustly* to bar others off that pleasure and delight, which they were qualified for and entitled to enjoy, and have been so

*vile*

vile and barbarous as to load others unjustly with unhappiness and misery, and thereby have frustrated the gracious purpose of their kind Creator towards his creatures; such persons are, in the nature of the thing, the proper objects of *divine displeasure*; and it becomes the *wisdom* and *justice* of Almighty God, to shew his resentment at such a conduct, by debarring those persons from the happiness of another world, and by plunging them into unspeakable misery. Happiness is the desire of every *sensible creature*; and, therefore, it must be *cruel* causelessly to bar that from a creature, which is the natural desire of every living thing; and to *abound* in this is to be highly criminal, and worthy of a severe correction. And as all vicious persons have been envious at, or have indulged in themselves a disposition to cut off the happiness of others; so it is *just* and *reasonable* that they should be made to feel, in a sensible manner, what the want of happiness is. Again, misery is the *natural aversion* of all the sensible world; and, therefore, *causelessly* to make miserable, and to abound in it, is to *deserve* to be made miserable in a very high degree. And as vicious persons have barbarously and wickedly loaded others with unhappiness and misery; so it is *just* and *reasonable* that they should feel the weight of that hand, which is able to make them miserable beyond expression. And to suppose in the present case, that it is contrary to *goodness* to make such vicious persons miserable, is very absurd. Goodness *naturally disposes* the agent, in which it resides, to *communicate* happiness to others, according to his power; and it as *naturally rises up* against, and disposes that agent to shew his resentment at the *causeless* communication of the contrary. To communicate misery causelessly is opposit to *goodness*; and, therefore, such a conduct is a proper ground of resentment to a good being, and will,



in the nature of the thing, raise in him a *just indignation* against those that practice it. And, the quicker and the stronger the *sense* of goodness is upon a person's mind, the quicker and stronger will that *resentment* be which spring from it, in proportion to the vileness of the action. And as God possesses the *height* and *perfection* of goodness, so he has the *quickest sense* of the contrary ; which will be shewn in that just displeasure he will execute upon all vicious unrepenting sinners in another world.

If it should be urged, that such a *wise* and *good* Being, as God is, will not punish men so *severely* in another world, for their enjoying a few *short-lived* pleasures here : I *answer* : God will not punish men at all in another world, for their enjoying a few short-lived pleasures here. Pleasure is what our *nature* leads us to, and what our Creator intended us for ; and, whilst we are pursuing it in such a way as, in *reason*, we ought, we are so far from incurring divine displeasure, that, on the contrary, we hereby render ourselves the suitable and proper objects of *divine approbation*. To desire and pursue pleasure, considered as pleasure, in such a way as is *honourable* in itself, and where no ill *consequence* attends the enjoyment, I think, cannot be criminal ; and, consequently, God will not punish men in another *world*, for their enjoying a few *short-lived* pleasures here ; but it is for their *vicious* and *unreasonable* pursuits of pleasure, in such a way as is *dishonourable* in itself, and *inconsistent* with, and *destructive* of the happiness of their fellow-creatures.

To conclude : Let not then the *vicious* man fly for sanctuary to *infidelity* to render his vicious course of life *easy* to himself, endeavouring hereby to remove the tormenting fears of a *future judgment* and *retribution* ; because *infidelity* cannot minister  
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any just ground of *comfort* to him; the case being the same, in that respect, whether this or that revelation be of a divine original, or not. The *certainty* of God's calling men to an account, and rendering to them a due reward of their deeds in another state, does not so much depend upon *revelation*, as upon the *justice* and *equity*, the *reasonableness* and *fitness* of the thing; and, therefore, must always be the same, whether God interposes and makes a declaration concerning it, or not. This, therefore, is what I would recommend to, and leave upon my reader's mind, *viz.* that he is under *natural obligations* both to God and *man*, from that *relation* he stands in to his Creator, and to his fellow-creatures; and that, in *reason*, he is *answerable* to God, for the discharge of them; and that it is his true *interest* steadily to pursue the great end of his creation, *viz.* the common good, by rendering himself an agreeable, useful, and lovely creature. For as this will render him the proper object of *divine* regard; so it is the *sure way* to the happiness of *this life* and of *another*. And when he has thus acted his part in life, and is gone off the stage of action, God will, in his due time, pronounce upon him this comfortable sentence, *Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*



TRACT

# TRACT XXXII.

## SOME SHORT

### *Reflections on Virtue and Happiness.*

Wherein is shewn,

That *Good* and *Evil* are founded in the abstract Nature and reason of Things : That Selfishness and Benevolence are two distinct and independent Principles of Action in Man: That Virtue is solely founded in Benevolence; and, that the Preserving and Cherishing in ourselves a benevolent Temper and Disposition is the most sure Way to a Happy Life.

**T**HAT there are some actions *good*, and others *evil*, in the abstract nature and reason of thing, is affirmed by some, and denied, or, at least, doubted of by others. And the ground of this doubt arises from hence, *viz.* the *different* opinions of mankind in this respect ; what one esteems good, another esteems evil, &c. Whereas it is urged, that if good and evil were founded in *nature*, then, the opinions and conceptions of mankind concerning them would be the same. And, here, I think, it must be allowed, that if good and evil are founded in the abstract nature and reason of things, then, there must be some *common principle*, which is *self-evident*, that all mankind are agreed in, which is the ground and foundation of all our reasonings on this subject. But, then, I think, it must likewise be allowed on the other side, that if, by any *false reasoning* from that principle, other principles are introduced, and, from hence, arise different princi-

principles, with respect to good and evil amongst mankind; this, in reality, is no objection against good and evil being founded in *nature*, as aforesaid.

That pleasure and pain, or happiness and misery, are really *distinct and different* in nature; that is, happiness is really delectable and agreeable, and misery is really afflictive and disagreeable, is evident from *experience* to all mankind, and, I think, must be evident to all other *moral agents*, who are capable of taking in the ideas which are annexed to those words. So that this must be allowed to be a *self-evident proposition* or a *common principle*, which all mankind are agreed in; and, therefore, whatever will follow in strict reasoning, as a *just consequence* from this principle, I think, ought to be allowed. As thus, If happiness be really delightful and agreeable, and if misery be really afflictive and disagreeable, then, it will unavoidably follow, that happiness is *preferable* to misery; that happiness is the *proper object* of our desires and pursuits, and that misery is the *proper object* of our aversion and shunning. Again, if happiness be the proper object of our choice, in opposition to the absence of happiness, or to misery, it will follow that when two kinds or branches of pleasure, one greater than the other, become the object of our choice, and cannot be enjoyed together; then, in the nature of the thing, the *greater* is preferable to the less. For tho' the less be the proper object of our choice, considered as pleasure, yet it ceases to be so, when it comes in competition with a pleasure that is greater, the enjoyment of which is incompatible with it. For if it is right to *chuse pleasure*, because it is pleasing and agreeable; then it is right to prefer the *greater* to the less, because the greater is *more pleasing* and agreeable. This, I think, will follow in strict reasoning, supposing no other considerati-



on comes into the case, to direct our choice otherwise. Again, if misery be afflictive and disagreeable, then, when two of those evils are present, and one or other of them must of necessity be submitted to, it is right and fit, in the nature of the thing, that we prefer the *less* to the greater. For if misery ought, in reason, to be *shunned*, because it is afflictive and disagreeable; then, in reason, we ought to shun the *greater* rather than the *less*, because the greater is *more afflictive* and disagreeable. Again, if happiness be in itself really pleasing and agreeable, and if misery be in itself really afflictive and disagreeable; then, it will follow, that the communication of happiness is *preferable* to the communication of misery; that the communication of *happiness* is, in the nature of the thing, *kind* and *good*; and that the communication of *misery* is, in the nature of the thing, *unkind* and *evil*. Again, if happiness be proper to be chosen for *one's self*, because it is pleasing and agreeable; then, it is fit and proper to be chosen for *others*, because it is equally pleasing and agreeable to them also. And if it is right and fit to shun and avoid *misery* for one's self, because it is afflictive and disagreeable; then it is right and fit to *guard* and *secure* others from it; and it is wrong and evil to *communicate misery* to them, because misery is equally afflictive and disagreeable to them also. I say, these consequences evidently and unavoidably follow, supposing no other consideration comes into the case, the reason being the same in both cases; it being equally as reasonable that all others should be happy, as that we ourselves should be so. Again, if happiness be the proper object of our choice, and if it is equally as reasonable that *each individual* should be happy, as that any other individual should be so; then, it is right and fit to prefer our *own happiness* to that of  
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any other individual, when these come in competition. For as we are *nearer* and *dearer* to ourselves, than any other individual; and as we have an *equal title* to happiness with any other individual; so this in reason ought to determine our choice, in favour of *ourselves* when our own happiness and that of any other individual come in competition. Again, if the greater good be, in nature and reason, preferable to the less, which, surely, must be allowed, then, the consequences are unavoidable, *viz.* that the publick happiness is *preferable* to the happiness of any individual; that a *more general happiness* is preferable to a less general, &c. These are consequences, which, I think, will follow in strict reasoning, from the one common and self-evident principle before laid down. And, therefore, if men in their farther reasonings, with respect to the great variety of complex cases which the subject affords, should draw any *wrong conclusions*, which it is easy to suppose may be done, and from hence, should arise *different opinions* concerning the good, or evil, of actions in particular cases; all that will follow, from hence, is, that men are *liable to err* in this, as well as in many other cases; but it will by no means invalidate the evidence I have here produc'd, to prove the following proposition, *viz. That good and evil are founded in the abstract nature and reason of things.* And

If there are any of our species, who taste pleasure in, and by the *pain* and *misery* which they *communicate* to their fellow-creatures, which it is hard to suppose; and as it is not the case of our species in general, so it is not the result of the human constitution, but must be the effect of some disorder in the *particular constitution* of each individual; it will not follow in reason, that they ought to communicate that pain and misery, in

order to taste the pleasure which will arise to themselves thereby, but the contrary. For as the affection is *vicious*, as it is excited by an object that is in itself *evil*, and thereby naturally tends to introduce evil and misery into the world; so, for that reason, it ought not to be gratified and indulged, but to be *checked* and *restrained*. And if a man should be led by such a vicious affection to pursue pleasure, yet he could not in reason *justify* his conduct herein, any more than he could, if by a *vitiating* palate he tasted pleasure, in eating or drinking such things as were *destructive* to his *health*, and yet would eat and drink those things, to give himself the pleasure that arose from them, which in reason he ought not. For as his vitiated appetite naturally leads him to *hurt* and *injure himself*, and, therefore, ought in reason to be restrained; so his vitiated affection naturally leads him to *hurt* and *injure others*; and, therefore, it ought in reason to be restrained also. *Nature* leads him to pursue pleasure in each case; but, then, the *circumstances* which attend them render it fit and reasonable, that he should deny himself, and not gratify those inclinations. As to the pleasure which a man takes in *shooting a partridge*, and the like, these are cases which, I think, do not come in to the present question; because the *pleasure* of the one does not spring from the *misery* of the other, but from a variety of other causes, *viz.* the *exercise* a man gives his body by riding, or walking; the entertaining his *eye* with a variety of objects that are presented to his view; the exercising his *dexterity* in shooting; the prospect of obtaining a *prize* which the game is consider'd to be; the hope of gratifying his *appetite*, or entertaining his *friends* with what he makes himself the master of; the discharging himself from other *enjoyments* for a time, that he may taste the greater

greater pleasure upon his return to them; these, and the like, I presume, are the *springs* of *action*, and the *foundation* of that *pleasure* which a man tastes in such exercises, and not the *pain* and *misery* of the creature. So that the question here will be, not, whether one creature may *justifiably* take pleasure in communicating pain and misery to another? that not being the present case; but, whether the taking away the life of the creature *in this way*, which, of course, will introduce pain and misery to it, tho' it be not intended, be in reason *justifiable*? And here the good of the *whole* comes into the case; that is, whether the taking away the life of the creature, as aforesaid, be for the good, or hurt, of the creation in general, of which, I think, the *former* is the case; but that is a question which is not to be discussed here. And

As actions are good, or evil, and, as such, are the proper objects of our *approbation*, or *dislike*, when consider'd in the abstract nature and reason of things; so those actions render the *actor* the proper object of approbation or dislike to every other moral agent. And as far as the *good*, or *hurt*, of others is concerned in them, they naturally and justly tend to awaken the affections of *benevolence*, or *resentment*. And, from hence, arise the equity and reasonableness of God's *rewarding* virtuous and *punishing* vicious men, viz. because the one freely communicates happiness, which, in reason, he ought to do, and so renders himself the *proper object* of divine kindness and benevolence; and the other freely contributes to the *causeless* communication of misery, which, in reason, he ought not; and thereby renders himself the proper object of divine *resentment* and *correction*. And, indeed, if this were not the case, then, the divine conduct, in the administration of rewards and punishments,



nishments, could not be *justified*; because there would not be any thing in nature which would render his creatures the *proper objects* of either.

If it should be urged, that the equity and reasonableness of the divine conduct, in this case, are not founded on the antecedent good, or evil, of actions, when consider'd abstractedly, as aforesaid, but on the *absolute will of God*, who as he has been pleased to give a law or rule of action to his creatures; so it is *just* and *reasonable* that he should *support* his *authority*, by rewarding those who obey, and by punishing those who transgress that law, seeing he has made known his pleasure herein. I *answer*; what is urged implies a *contradiction*; for if there be not an antecedent fitness or unfitness in actions, then, it is neither *just* nor *unjust*, neither *good* nor *evil*, neither *reasonable* nor *unreasonable*, for God to interpose and support his authority. Besides, upon the present supposition, there is not any thing in nature that can be the ground and foundation of a *divine law*; that is, there is not any thing in nature which affords a *motive* or *reason* to God, to give a law to his creatures; neither is there any thing in nature which renders one action *preferable* to another, to be the *rule* of that law. And, if God should, from mere *sovereignty* and *arbitrary pleasure*, give a revelation to his creatures; then, the most absolute *scepticism* or *uncertainty* would follow upon it; because all grounds of *confidence* in God are taken away upon this principle. For if God acts arbitrarily in *one instance*, he may in another, and so on. If he gives a revelation without reason, or rather, if there be no such thing in nature as reason and fitness for him to direct his actions by; then, he may *deceive* and *impose* upon his creatures in any, or in all the declarations he makes to them, for any thing we *know*, or for any *grounds* we have,  
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from which we may conclude the contrary; then, *truth* and *falsehood* stand upon a foot, with respect to God, and we are under an *absolute uncertainty*, which he will chuse. And, on the other side, if there is a *rule of action* arising from the *natural relations* and the *essential differences* in things; and if it is *right* and *fit* that God should govern his actions by that rule; then, I think, it will follow, that it ought, in reason, to be a rule of action to every other *moral agent*, because what renders it it right and fit to one renders it equally so to all. And this leads me to observe,

That as natural good or happiness is, in reason, preferable to natural evil, or misery; so the *free* communication of the former is in itself *beautiful*, *lovely*, and *praise-worthy*; and, as such, is the proper object of choice or election to every moral agent; in opposition to non-action, or to the causeless communication of the contrary. And, consequently, it is to every moral agent a *proper* and *sufficient* foundation for action, when consider'd abstractedly from, and independent of any other consideration. - And this is plainly the case, with respect to *God*. For as *selfishness* cannot possibly be a spring or principle of action in him; so it is the natural and essential beautifulness and loveliness of communicating happiness, and the natural unfitness and disagreeableness of the causeless communication of the contrary, which are the *grounds* and *reasons* of his actions. It was from a principle of *benevolence* only, that our Creator exerted his power and wisdom, in calling this world into being; and it is from the *natural* and *essential differences* in things, from which arises that *law of reason* by which God always directs his actions. And as man is, by his natural frame and composition, a *moral agent*, that is, capable of discerning the natural and essential differences  
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in things ; so, from hence, it will follow that he is *capable* of communicating happiness *freely*, and for its own sake, or from a sense of the beauty and loveliness of it, when consider'd abstracted from, and independent of any other consideration, and, therefore, *can do it, if he will*. For tho' man is an *indigent* creature, and that naturally leads him to pursue his own happiness ; yet that is not in itself incompatible, but consistent with a free and disinterested regard for, and pursuit of, the happiness and well-being of the rest of his fellow-creatures ; because he is not only qualified to pursue *both*, but also to discern the *fitness* of that pursuit.

Happiness is the *great end* of being to every sensible creature ; and, therefore, the particular happiness of each individual must and will be the object of desire to every such creature ; and, consequently, *selfishness* is the produce of, or is a part of the *human constitution*. But tho' private happiness be the object of desire to every man, yet it not the *sole* and *only* object of that affection ; for as happiness is *desirable* for one's self, so it is desirable for others also. The agreeableness of pleasure to ourselves not only convinces us, that it must be alike agreeable to all others, but likewise disposes us to *communicate* that pleasure to them. So that *benevolence*, as well as *selfishness*, is the result of, or is a part of our *natural constitution* ; and each of these are *distinct* and *independent* principles of action. A man can pursue his own happiness, without any regard to the good of others, and he can pursue the good of others, without any view or regard to himself. And, tho' a man cannot prefer evil to good, this being as much out of his power, as it is to make the *smell* of a *rose*, or the *taste* of a *peach*, *disagreeable* to himself ; yet he may and can prefer the good of the *publick* to his own, when they  
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come in competition. For as selfishness and benevolence are two distinct and independent principles of action in man; so either of these may be so far *indulged*, or *depressed*, as to make the one give place to the other. A man can so far indulge his *selfish*, and depress his *social* affections, as to pursue his own good, without any regard to the good and happiness of others; and he can so far depress his *selfish*, and indulge his *social affections*, as to pursue the good of others, in *opposition* to his own, when these come in competition. And tho' private and publick happiness are so inseparably united, as that a man cannot rightly pursue his own good, but he will thereby give pleasure to others, nor can he rightly pursue the happiness of others, but he will give pleasure to himself; yet it will not follow that either *selfishness*, or *benevolence*, is the sole and only principle of action in man. For tho' these mutually introduce and contribute to each other; yet as they are distinct and different in themselves, so they are two distinct and independent principles of action. And if it should be urged, that, because a man cannot rightly pursue the good of others, without giving pleasure to himself, therefore, *selfishness* is the *sole* and *only principle* of action in him; then, it may with equal reason be urged on the other side, that because a man cannot rightly pursue his own happiness, but he will give pleasure to others thereby; therefore, *benevolence* is the *sole* and *only principle* of action. But neither of these is the case, as I have shewn above. And tho' the actions, that flow from benevolence, will give *pleasure* and *satisfaction*; yet that pleasure is only the result of, and not the ground and reason of those actions; like as when a man pursues happiness for himself, he will give pleasure to others; and yet that pleasure and delight, which accrues to others hereby,



hereby, is only the *result* of, but is not the ground and reason of that pursuit. Benevolence and selfishness being both natural, or the produce of the human constitution, we are thereby naturally led to pursue happiness, as well for others, as for ourselves; only, when these come in competition, then, the pursuit of either is a matter of choice or election to us. And tho', with respect to natural good, the *motive* to those actions, by which we propose to procure that good to ourselves, is *self-love*, or a desire of tasting pleasure in, and by those actions, as the agreeableness of a *peach* to our taste is the motive to those actions, by which we propose to give ourselves the *pleasure* arising from that agreeable sensation; yet the case is otherwise, with respect to *moral good*, or those actions which are the produce of moral fitness. In the one case we act, presuming it will *prove agreeable* to us; and, in the other, we act, because it is so, *antecedent* to the action. If I see a body *figured* and *coloured* like another body, *viz.* a *peach*, which, when bruised in my mouth, had given me a very *agreeable sensation*; I am thereby induced to bruise this body in my mouth likewise, in expectation of tasting the *like pleasure* as from the former; tho' in this my expectation may possibly be disappointed, because some *defect* either in the fruit, or in my palate, may render it *disagreeable* to me. So that in this case, tho' pleasure is the motive to the action, yet it is not the agreeableness of the *action itself*, it being experience only which can determine, whether it will be agreeable, or not, but only the *hope* and *expectation* that it will prove so, which is the ground and reason of that action. Whereas, with respect to moral fitness, the case is otherwise; we act, because it appears to us beautiful and agreeable, *antecedent* to the action, and not upon a presumption

tion or in hope and expectation that it will prove so. If I see my neighbour in distress, it instantly appears *beautiful* and *agreeable* to me to interpose for his relief, supposing all circumstances concur to render it fit and proper, and that I am capable of so doing. And, in this case, it is not any pleasure or agreeableness *subsequent* to, or that are the *attendants* on the action, but it is the *antecedent beauty* and *fitness* of relieving which is the ground and reason of that action; and which will be beautiful and agreeable, whether I am prevailed upon by it to minister that relief, or not. And it is the antecedent fitness which is the *foundation* of that *pleasure* we taste in, and after the performance of such an action, and not the pleasure which arises from the performance of the action, which is the *ground* and foundation of that *antecedent* beauty and agreeableness.

This will be farther evident, if we observe, that, with respect to *natural good*, as in the eating of a peach, no one is sharer by the action, in that *kind* of *pleasure* which the action introduces, but the *actor*; whereas with respect to *moral good*, or the communicating happiness to others, the *by-standers*, who are no way concerned in the action, are *sharers with*, and taste that very kind of pleasure *by* the *action*, that the actor doth in the performance of that action. If I see another man perform a good action, it give me the same kind of pleasure, as if I had performed that action myself; whereas, if I see a man eat a peach, this action does not raise in me that *agreeable sensation*, which it does *in him* that eats it; which shews not only that there is no just arguing from one case to the other, but also that the *beauty* and *agreeableness*, which is inseparable from those actions that are *morally good*, do not arise from, nor depend upon the *pleasure* which accrues to the  
actor

actor in, and by the performance of those actions. And tho' in many instances we pursue the good of others, either in *whole*, or in *part*, out of a view to our own *interest*; yet, surely, this is far from being *always* the case. And, I imagine, it is *seldom* that men do good to others, purely in view of, and for the sake of that pleasure and satisfaction, which will accrue to themselves thereby. A sense of the good of others, and the desirableness of making them sharers in the pleasures we enjoy, are *powerful* and *sufficient* motives to induce us to procure those pleasures to them, and that too, for their sakes, and not for the sake of any pleasure which we propose to taste in so doing. And the neglect of this naturally introduces *remorse* and uneasiness of mind; the ground of which is not the with-holding pleasure from ourselves, but the with-holding our hand from giving that pleasure, and doing that good to others which was in our power to do. Whilst the *four lepers* were indulging themselves in eating and drinking, and loading themselves with gold and raiment, from tent to tent, in the *camp* of the *Syrians*, their hearts smote them, and they said one to another, *We do not well: This is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace*, 2 Kings vii. 8, 9. Now, the question is, what was the *ground* of self-accusation to those lepers? not, surely, the with holding pleasure from themselves, but the with holding from the hungry *Citizens of Samaria* the opportunity of sharing with them in that *plenty*, which the forsaken camp of the *Syrians* afforded, and which it was then in their power to put into their hands.

If it should be said, that tho' a man can communicate happiness to others, when that communication is not incompatible with any enjoyment to himself; yet our inclinations so *strongly*  
*dispose*

*dispose* us to pursue happiness for *ourselves*, that, except we have the promise and expectation of some greater good to be enjoyed hereafter, which will *make up* for the loss we sustain here, we cannot be prevailed upon to part with our present happiness, and submit to suffer for the sake of society, or upon any other consideration. I *answer*, As we are naturally inclined to pursue happiness for ourselves, so that inclination leads us to pursue our *present* happiness, or the pleasure which comes before us, and is *immediately* in view, in opposition to any future happiness which may be incompatible with it; but, then, those natural inclinations, how strong soever they may be, are under the government of, and are *controulable* by our *reason*; so that we can *deny* ourselves a present pleasure, and can submit to bear *present misery*, in hope and expectation of some greater good laid up for us in futurity. And our reason can likewise, if *exerted*, govern and controul those *very inclinations* from *another view*; so that we can deny ourselves, and suffer, as aforesaid, when it is apparently subservient to the *common good*. Our natural inclinations are *controuled*, in both cases, by our *reason*, and our reason can as well exert its authority, and restrain those inclinations, in one case, as in the other. And as the difference betwixt natural good and evil, betwixt publick and private happiness, and the natural beauty and desirableness of communicating pleasure, and the like, are *eternally* and *unchangeably* the same, consider'd abstractedly from, and antecedent to any *positive law*, which might constitute them or any *promise* of future good, which might influence in the choice of them; yea, antecedent to the consideration of a *Deity*; so that rule of action, which naturally arises from them, and the fitness and reasonableness of our governing our actions by



that rule, are *perpetually* and *unchangeably* the same, when consider'd abstractedly from, and antecedent to all the considerations beforemention'd. Whether the foremention'd rule of action may in strictness be called a *law*, and whether the fitness of governing our actions by that rule may properly be called an *obligation*, according to the use of those words, *law* and *obligation*, in the *English language*, I think, is not worth enquiring into; but that there is such a *perpetual* and *unchangeable* rule arising from the nature, the relations, and the essential differences in things, and that moral agents ought, in reason, to *direct* and *govern* their actions by that rule, is as evident and clear to my understanding, as that the whole is equal to all its parts, or as any other self-evident proposition. And,

Tho' selfishness and benevolence are both the produce of, and are the natural result of the *human constitution*; yet it is what springs from the *latter* only, which comes under the denomination of *goodness* and *virtue*. \* If a man pursues happiness for himself, and prefers his own good to that of any other individual; this, I think, is perfectly just and reasonable, and is what approves itself to the understanding of every man. But, then, there is nothing of *virtue* or *goodness* in it, as those terms are commonly applied amongst mankind; they being used to express *communicative goodness*, and not the good a man does to himself. If a man does good to himself, the idea, raised in our minds hereby, is expressed by the the term *selfishness*; he served or minister'd to himself. But if a man does good to others, for that reason, be-

\* Note, The words *virtue* and *goodness* are here taken in a *restrained* or *limited* sense; and are used to express, not all those actions which are, in reason, *approveable*, but only such as are, in reason, *rewardable*.

cause he would do so, the idea raised in our minds by it is expressed by the term *goodness*; he did good, that is, he served or minister'd to the good of others; the terms *good* and *virtuous*, in this case, being generally confin'd to those actions which are the produce of *benevolence*. It is, when we pursue the good of others, in *distinction* from, or in *opposition* to the good of ourselves, that our actions come under the denomination of *good* and *virtuous* actions; and they are more or less so, as the good and happiness of others is more or less the *ground* and *reason* of those actions. And as far as a view of our own good comes into the case, so far the goodness and virtuousness of those actions is *lessened* and *decreased*. And the reason of this is evident, *viz.* because the actions only, which spring from benevolence, render the actor *amiable* and *rewardable* to a foreign agent, who is disinterested in those actions. When a man does *hurt* to himself thro' some wrong conduct, tho' this would render him worthy of *blame*, and tho' his actions would be *disapproveable*; yet here is nothing which excites the *resentment* of a *by-stander*, and which would render him *worthy* of *correction*, upon that account; he has done *no evil* to others, and, therefore, he can *deserve* no evil from them. So likewise, when a man does good to himself, how *reasonable* and *just* soever this may be, yet there is nothing *valuable* in it, which *merits reward*, or which excites a *by-stander* to contribute to such a man's *felicity*; for as he sought *himself* only in that action, so he *cannot* deserve any thing from another, upon the account of it. Whereas, when a man pursues the good of *another*, for that other's sake, then he renders himself truly *lovely* and *amiable* in the eyes of others; and they are naturally and justly excited by it to contribute to such a man's *felicity*, if ability and opportunity

concur to render them capable of so doing. For as he *generously* sought the good of *others*, so he *justly merits* the love and service of others upon that account. And, therefore, if a man pursues the good of others, partly for their sakes, and partly for his own; as far as his own interest is the *ground* and *reason* of that pursuit, so far, of course, the virtue and rewardableness of it is *lessened*. And if the ground of that pursuit be purely *selfishness*, then, there can be nothing virtuous or rewardable in it; because it is not *selfishness* but *benevolence* only, which is the ground and foundation of amiableness and rewardableness in the present case, as I have before shewn. From which it will follow, that if selfishness were the *sole* and *only* principle of action in man, then, *virtue* and *rewardableness* would be incompatible with human nature. Again, if a man pursues the good of others, upon condition and in view of some present or future good *promised* to him; this, I think, would give him a *legal* and *just title* to what is promised; but, then, here is nothing of *virtue* or \* *reward* in the case. This is all fair traffick or bargaining; here are covenants made and executed, from which virtue and reward are excluded. For as, in such a case, man is not virtuous, but *selfish* in what he does, so he is not rewarded, but *paid a just debt* in what he receives.

If it should be urged, that this *subverts* the design of the gospel, which was to lead men to the practice of their duty, from the *hope* and *expectation* of a promised future reward; for if acting in view of some good promised be selfishness, as most certainly it is; and if acting from a selfish prin-

\* *Note*, That the term *reward* is here taken in a strict sense, as expressing only what is given freely upon the account of merit or desert, and not what is paid as a debt upon the account of promise, or otherwise.

ciple does not render men the proper objects of reward, as is here supposed; then, the promises of the gospel tend only to *betray* men into *selfishness*, which will not qualify them for the reward promised.

I answer, *first*, That the *common happiness* is the grand design of the present system of things, and the great end which God proposed in calling this world into being. And this end is abundantly *frustrated* by men's *indulging* their selfish, and *depressing* their social affections; this being the *grand cause* of all those evils and miseries, which mankind introduce and bring upon each other. And, therefore, if God, out of regard to the *common good*, has promised to those, who *pursue it*, the happiness of another world, tho' that pursuit be not the produce of benevolence, but only in obedience to his command, and from an expectation of what he has promised; then, God will most certainly be as good as his word, by *paying every debt* which he has thus contracted by promise; and, consequently, the promises of the gospel serve not to betray men into selfishness, and so to unqualify them for the promised reward, but to engage them to do, out of regard to *themselves*, what would be *valuable* and *rewardable* in itself, if done from a better and a more *generous principle*. Again,

I answer, *secondly*, That the great design of the gospel, and to which its promises are *intended* to be *subservient*, is to work in men a *benevolent temper* and disposition, in opposition to that *general corruption*, or *vicious selfishness*, which prevails amongst mankind, and which is the ground and foundation of all our *woe*. The great thing, recommended in the gospel, is a *spirit of love*; and as love worketh no ill to its neighbour, so it disposes the agent, in which it resides, to remove



the uneasiness, and contribute to the happiness and well-being of all. And it is to those who are animated by *this spirit*, to whom the promises of the gospel are made; so that, where the *benevolent temper* is wanting, there is no title to those promises. St. Paul was so sensible of this, that he declares for himself, *if he had bestowed all his goods to feed the poor, and if he had given his body to be burned, and had not charity, or a benevolent temper, it would have profited him nothing*, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. He carries the supposition to the greatest height, and instances in cases, which if actions alone, considered abstractedly from the disposition of mind they spring from, would be *valuable*, then these, surely, would be considered, as such. And yet these, when considered *abstractedly* from a benevolent temper, as the ground and foundation of them, St. Paul considers, as unprofitable.

Besides, the promises of the gospel are *designed*, and are *subservient* to another purpose, *viz.* to render the losses and crosses, the pains and afflictions, which good men are liable to, and often meet with in this world, the more *easy* and *tolerable* to them. For tho' *patience* and *resignation* are the best and most alleviating remedies, which can be applied under the aforesaid evils, and, therefore, one would think, should be always chosen, for their own sake, seeing the contrary to these does but add to the burden of affliction; yet sad experience shews, that this is not always the case. And, therefore, when a man is directed by the *promises* of the *gospel*, to look forward to a state, when all pain and anguish shall cease, and all tears shall be wiped away from his eyes, and he shall be filled with unspeakable joy; this naturally tends to lead him to that *patience* and *resignation*, which is his present only refuge, and which possibly otherwise he might not obtain.

If it should be urged, that if *virtue* is founded solely in *benevolence*, then, in many instances, it cannot be *supported*; as when a man is called to *severe trials* and sufferings in the cause of virtue; then he has not wherewith to support him under, and carry him thro' those trials, except he calls in the hope and expectation of a future recompence. And, if he does that, then, as far as he acts from such a view, so far the virtuousness of his actions and sufferings is destroyed.

Before I return an answer to this objection, it will be proper to consider, what it is to suffer in the cause of *virtue* and *goodness*; namely, when that suffering is apparently subservient to the *publick good*. So that when a man suffers for his *propagating* or *maintaining* this or that set of *opinions*, or this or that *speculative proposition*, except the propagating or maintaining such opinions and propositions apparently tend to the publick good, this is not suffering in the cause of virtue. A man, in such a case, may suffer in the cause of *truth*, but not in the cause of virtue; *truth* and *virtue* being as distinct and different in nature, as colour and sound. I shall not enter into the question, whether suffering for the truth be not, in some instances, *amiable* and *rewardable*? But what I observe is, that to suffer for the truth, as such, considered abstractedly from the good and benefit which the world may receive by that suffering, is not suffering in the cause of virtue. But when a man suffers to promote or secure the *good of others*, and with that view; then, I think, he may properly be said to suffer in the cause of goodness, or for virtue's sake.

This being premised, I observe, that a *benevolent temper*, which is the produce of, or is a part of the human constitution, when not *depressed* by the prevailing power of selfishness, but *cherished*

and kept to its due height, and when seconded by *reason*, is a *proper foundation* for virtuous actions, in the most trying instances. True benevolence, &c. will dispose a man to venture upon the mouth of a cannon, and look even *death* in the face, when that adventure is apparently necessary, to secure his country from *slavery* and *misery*. And tho' selfishness so far prevails, as that the instances are but *few*, in which men *suffer greatly* in the cause of virtue, from a virtuous principle; yet it will not follow, that virtue has no solid foundation in nature, nor any thing by which it may be supported; but all that will follow is, that *eminent virtue* is rarely to be met with in the world; which possibly may be too true. But, then, it is equally as true, that there are but *few* men, comparatively, upon whom the promises of *future happiness* have such a prevailing influence, as to dispose them to forego all present enjoyments, and to yield up themselves to suffering and death, to secure to themselves that future happiness. And as it would be inconclusive to argue, that seeing the promise of future happiness does not *always* prevail upon men to go thro' the severest sufferings, when called to it, for its sake; therefore, the promise of future happiness is not a proper or sufficient foundation for such sufferings; so it would be alike inconclusive to argue, in the case of virtue, that seeing benevolence, tho' seconded by reason, does not *always* prevail upon men to practise virtue, in the most trying instances, that, therefore, a benevolent temper, &c. are not a proper or sufficient foundation for the practice of virtue, in such instances, the argument being equally inconclusive in both cases. As to that question, *viz.* whether a man can chuse absolute and extreme misery, for the sake of virtue? This not being the case of those who suffer in the cause of virtue,

virtue, the question is needless. All suffering in the cause of virtue, as it is a matter of choice or election, will yield abundant *satisfaction* to the mind, tho' that satisfaction be not the ground and reason of those sufferings. And

As virtue is founded solely in benevolence, so it is the preserving and cherishing in ourselves a *benevolent temper*, which is the *foundation* of a *happy life*. Happiness is the great end of being to every sensible creature, as I have already observed; 'tis for that only that being is *desirable*; barely to be, considered abstractedly from happiness, is no better than non-existence. And to be miserable, exclusive of any degree of happiness mixed with that misery, is worse than not to be, in proportion to that degree of misery which existence introduces. A *happy life* is what we all desire and pursue. Who is there, but would, who is there, but does chuse to pass agreeably thro' life? And yet this is what almost all our species, more or less, complain of the want of. From whence, then, is it that we are not generally happy? Surely, our Creator *intended* us for happiness, and has *provided* whatever is necessary to make us so; and, therefore, the *ground* of this complaint must be *in ourselves*. This, then, must be worth our enquiring into, *viz.* What is the *ground* of our mis-carriages, and which is the most *sure way* to a happy life. And,

Here, if we take a partial view of the case, we may be led to think, that the indulging our selfish, and depressing our social affections, is the *shortest* and *surest* way to happiness. For as, in such a case, a man pursues happiness only for himself, and this one point is what all his desires, contrivances, and endeavours are directed to obtain, without incumbering himself with any care or regard for the happiness of others; so, from such a

view,



view, one may be led to think, that this is the most likely way to obtain it. But this is so far from being the truth of the case, that, on the contrary, it is the cause of our *miscarriages*, and the *ground* and *foundation* of our unhappiness. Whereas, if we preserve a *due balance* in the human constitution, by keeping our selfish affections under a proper *restraint*, by cherishing in ourselves a *benignant* temper, and by making the *common good* the common and grand principle to direct our actions by ; this is the *high road* to a happy life. And,

That we may have a full view of the case, it will be proper to observe, that a happy life is a *composition* of various kinds of enjoyments, *viz.* sensual, intellectual, and moral. And these are so *intermixed* and *restrained*, as that one kind, or one instance, does not *destroy*, but *brighten* the pleasures, which arise from the other kinds, or the other instances of enjoyment ; so that no particular enjoyment is to be taken into the account, which introduces such *pain* and  *vexation* in the pursuit, or leaves such *remorse* and *anguish* after the enjoyment, as is equal to, or more than an equivalent to the pleasure which arose from that enjoyment. If I should, in the drinking a gallon of liquor, taste very agreeable pleasure, for the space of *three hours* ; and if this enjoyment should bring upon me *six hours* of intense pain and remorse, and anguish of mind for so many days more ; then, the forementioned enjoyment is so far from being a part of a *happy life*, that, on the contrary, it must be placed to the other side of the account ; because that, and so much pleasure more, is to be subtracted from other enjoyments, as is an *equivalent* to the overplus of misery, which that enjoyment introduced, before the account, with respect to happiness and misery, will be upon a balance.

lance. Again, all the branches of enjoyment, which break in upon, and are *bars* to other kinds or instances of enjoyment; so much pleasure must be subtracted from these, as is equal to that overplus of pleasure which they are a bar to. And if those enjoyments are not equal to that overplus, so far as they are *deficient*, they are to be placed to the other side of the account, and to be considered, not as branches of happiness, but as *obstructions* to it. If a man, in heaping up a large quantity of the riches of this world, should taste some *low degree of pleasure*, in reflecting upon his acquisitions and possessions; yet, if his present pursuits are a bar to other enjoyments, that would give him pleasures, which, for kind and degree, are *much superior* to those he now tastes; then, those pleasures are not to be considered, as parts of a *happy life*, but as *bars* to that happiness. These things being premised, the proper question will be, considering the various *kinds* and *instances* of pleasure which a man's *constitution* and *condition* in life render him capable of enjoying, what course he should take, which might, upon the whole, give him the *greatest pleasure*, and render life the *greatest blessing* to him? And this, I say, will be done by preserving a *due balance* in the human constitution, by *cherishing* in ourselves a benevolent disposition, by keeping our selfish affections under a proper *restraint*, and by subjecting our conduct to the government of *reason*. The issue of all which will be a *moderate pursuit*, and a *temperate enjoyment* of this world's good things, under a strict regard to the *happiness* and well-being of the rest of mankind. And,

For the farther illustration of this point, I observe, that a *vicious selfishness* generally leads men either to a *violent* and *extravagant pursuit* of *pleasure*, that is, to pursue this or that kind or branch

of

of pleasure, at all adventures; without regarding how a man's own good in the general is affected by it, or how it directly, or in its consequences, affects the good of others and the happiness of society; or else it leads men to a *violent and extravagant pursuit of riches*, and so bars the enjoyment of many comforts, with respect to themselves, and prevents their being kind and beneficent to others. But neither of these is the way to happy life; that lies strait before us in a mean betwixt those extremes, *viz.* in a moderate pursuit, and a temperate enjoyment of the blessings of life, pursuing our own happiness, under a strict regard to the common good.

As to all violent and extravagant pursuits of pleasure, these, surely, when weighed in the balance, will be found wanting. These are so far from constituting a happy life, that, on the contrary, they are *bars* to that happiness. For tho' the *drunkard*, the *debauchee*, and the like, may taste some very *agreeable* and *intense*, but momentary pleasures, in their enjoyments; yet, alas! when these come in competition with the *intellectual* and *rational delights*, which a man bars himself the enjoyment of, with the *disorder*, sooner or later, brought upon his constitution; the *pain* and *anguish* of body, the *uneasiness* and *remorse* of mind, which is intruduced thereby; the *trouble* and *vexation* he gives to others, and which, when reflected on, return back upon *himself*; I say, when every thing is taken into the case, then, strictly speaking, such a man's pleasures cannot be said to constitute a happy life, but are bars to that happiness. And, here, I would beg my reader to look abroad, and take a general view of those persons who violently and extravagantly pursue pleasure; see them *with* and *without* their enjoyments; see what they go thro' in many instances

enjoyments, as that one kind, or one instance, should not break in upon, but heighten the pleasures which arise from the other kinds, or the other instances of enjoyment; this would naturally tend to preserve in them a *healthy* constitution, *soundness* of mind, *calmness* in their passions, *quickness* in their affections, and a *relish* for every kind of pleasure; and when they thus pursue their *own happiness*, in conjunction with the happiness and well-being of the *rest* of their fellow-creatures, making a suitable provision for their *offspring* and *dependents*, ministering assistance and succour, according to their ability, to the *needy* and *distressed*, living *neighbourly* and *friendly* with all, and making the common good the common and the *grand principle* to direct their actions by; this will be a constant *spring* of pleasure to them, which will minister abundantly to their *delight* and *satisfaction*. And as it will give them the *enjoyment* of many valuable pleasures, which otherwise they would not taste; so it will prevent many *evils* which otherwise they would be in danger of fallen into. It will cut off a great deal of *anxious* and *needless care*, of *burdensome* and *afflictive* toil and labour, and remove the *foundation* of those uneasinesses which many of our species groan under the weight of. In short, this is the way to solid and lasting felicity, and the *high road* to a happy life.

Man is made a *social creature*; and as he is designed, with all other living creatures, for happiness, so he is designed to be happy *in* and *with society*. And when he pursues his own happiness, under a strict regard to the common good, then he is in the most proper and likely way to obtain it. Then as he is capable of, and disposed to taste of what may give him pleasure; so in his enjoyments he is the most free from *reluctancy*, and from  
every



every thing ease which might be an *alloy* to it. And as he prevents the *pain* and *disorder* of body and the *uneasiness* of mind, which are the attendants on a *selfish* and *violent* pursuit of pleasure; so the absence of this or that kind or branch of pleasure cannot be the ground of much *uneasiness* to him; because as he is not violently set upon any enjoyment, so the absence of one kind or branch of pleasure can easily be supply'd by the presence of another. And as he is interested in the *common felicity*, so he is a sharer in every one's happiness thereby; whenever he beholds the *peace*, the *plenty*, the *prosperity*, which others abound in, these afford joy and *delight* to him; and whilst the selfish covetous man is gnawing his tongue for pain, at the prosperity of another, who plentifully enjoys what he would *monopolize* to himself, but would not make use of; the other is solacing himself in beholding the pleasure and satisfaction in life which his *neighbours* are enjoying. And tho' the troubles and afflictions which befall others will give an occasion of *concern* to him, yet that is abundantly made up by the agreeable pleasure, which arises from his *ministering* assistance, comfort, and relief to them. And whatever difficulties, afflictions, or distresses he may fall into, he has this satisfaction in himself that he has acted a *worthy* and a *manly* part. And as he has carefully avoided every thing which might draw upon him the *just enmity* of any, so he has taken the most sure course, to secure to himself the *affections* and *friendship* of *all*. If he looks back upon his life past, this affords no remorse or uneasiness of mind, but pleasure and satisfaction. And, if he looks forward upon death, this gives him no forebodings of a dreadful judgment and retribution, but good hope of a *blessed immortality*.

Thus,

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ble, but also the proper object of *resentment* to every other intelligent being, who is qualified to discern the baseness of those actions, and the valuable-ness of their contraries. And as vice is thus differently considered; so some *selfish actions* are so far from being, in any respect, *vicious*, that, on the contrary, they are really *virtuous*, in the more general sense of the word, *virtue*. And, therefore, in my *Discourse on Virtue and Happiness*, I did not, as it is said \* of me, confound together a *virtuous* and a *vicious selfishness*, and then argue against all selfish actions; but, on the contrary, I carefully distinguished betwixt such selfishness as is, in *reason*, *approvable*, and such as his *justly condemnable*, as will appear from the following quotation, and likewise from the quotation in the succeeding paragraph. "If a man pursues happiness for himself, and prefers his *own good* to that of any other individual, this, I think, is perfectly *just* and *reasonable*, and is what approves itself to the understanding of every man." And whereas, in my *Discourse on Virtue and Happiness*, I laid down the following proposition, *viz.* that *virtue is solely founded in benevolence*; here the term, *virtue*, I understood, not in the *larger*, but in the more *restrained sense* of that word, as is most evident from that whole discourse; wherein I referred only to such actions, as are not only approvable, but also render the agent, upon the account of them, the proper object of *reward* to every other intelligent being, who is no ways interested in those actions; and such *rewardable goodness* or *virtue*, I observed, is solely founded in *benevolence*. This is what I asserted; and which I endeavoured to support by the following reason, *viz.* "When a man does hurt to himself, thro' some wrong conduct, tho' this would render him worthy of

\* In Dr. Morgan's Defence of Natural and Revealed Religion.



“ *blame*, and tho’ his actions should be *disapprovable* ; yet here is nothing which excites the *re-*  
 “ *sentment* of a by-stander, and which would ren-  
 “ der him worthy of *correction*, upon that account.  
 “ For as he has done *no evil* to others ; so he can-  
 “ not, in reason, deserve any evil from them. In  
 “ like manner, when a man does good *to himself*,  
 “ how reasonable and just soever this may be ; yet  
 “ there is nothing *valuable* in it, which merits *re-*  
 “ *ward*, or which excites a by-stander to contri-  
 “ bute to such a man’s felicity. For as he fought  
 “ *himself only*, in that action ; so he cannot deserve  
 “ any thing from *another*, upon the account of it.  
 “ Whereas when a man pursues the good of ano-  
 “ ther, for that *other’s sake* ; then he renders him-  
 “ self truly *lovely* and *amiable* in the eyes of others,  
 “ and they are naturally and justly excited by it,  
 “ to contribute to such a man’s felicity, if ability  
 “ and opportunity concur to render them capable  
 “ of so doing. For as he *generously* fought the  
 “ good of others ; so he justly *merits* the love and  
 “ service of others, upon that account. ” This is  
 what I have offered, in favour of the proposition  
 before referred to ; which reasoning is *just* and *con-*  
*clusive*, for any thing that as yet been shewn to the  
 contrary. However, that I may make it more  
 clear, I will instance in a case, or two, and there-  
 by shew my reader that it is not the bare *fitness*, or  
*unfitness*, the *reasonableness*, or *unreasonableness* of an  
 action, which renders the agent the proper object  
 of *reward*, or *punishment*. As thus,

If it should be in a man’s power to enjoy *one*  
*hour’s pleasure to day*, or *two hours pleasure to morrow*,  
 these being incompatible, so that he cannot enjoy  
 both ; in this case, as the *greater good* is, in reason,  
 preferable to the *less* ; so it is certainly *fit* and *rea-*  
*sonable*, that a man should deny himself *one hour’s*  
*pleasure to day*, that he may enjoy *two hours plea-*  
sure

Sure to morrow; and to act otherwise would be  
*unfit* and *unreasonable*. Now, supposing a man  
 should act the unreasonable part, by giving him-  
 self one hour's pleasure, and thereby deprive him-  
 self of *two*; the question is, Whether such a con-  
 duct renders him the proper object of *resentment*,  
 and, consequently, of *punishment*, to a by-stander,  
 when no one is a sufferer, but the *fool himself*, by  
 his folly? and the answer to me appears self-evi-  
 dent: *viz.* That he is not. His weakness and fol-  
 ly, I think, render him the object of my *pity*, but  
 not of my *resentment*. And if I were to punish  
 him for it, I cannot see how I could, in reason,  
 be justified. And as, in this case, vice carries with  
 it its own punishment; so, I think, in reason,  
 that is all that the vicious person deserves, upon  
 account of it. On the other side, suppose a man  
 acts the reasonable part, by denying himself one  
 hour's pleasure to day, for the sake of two hours  
 pleasure to morrow: Would he deserve a *reward*,  
 for so doing? No, surely. For as he only sought  
*himself*, and as his virtue carries with it its own re-  
 ward; so, I think, it is all which, in reason, he  
 is entitled to. Again, suppose a man *patiently* bears  
 the evil which it is not in his power to remove;  
 this is certainly *right* and *fit*, because it renders  
 the affliction so much the *lighter*; but, then, does  
 a man deserve to be *rewarded*, for making his af-  
 fliction easy to himself? Surely, no. The case is  
 the same with all *selfish virtues*; for where men  
 solely seek *themselves*, I cannot see how they can,  
 in reason *merit*, that is, deserve any thing from o-  
 thers, upon account of it. And as it is not sel-  
 fish, but *benevolent virtue* only, which is, in rea-  
 son, *rewardable*; so it is not all vice, but only such  
 as is *injurious* and *hurtful* to others, which is, in  
 reason, *punishable*.

All reward is the produce of *gratitude*, that is,

it is returning to a person that *good*, which he has kindly and generously communicated to others. So that where there is no good *communicated*, nor *intended* to be communicated, there is no foundation for gratitude or reward. Whether we ourselves are sharers in the good communicated, or not, it alters not the case, any otherwise than as the obligation to be grateful rises *higher*, and becomes *stronger*, when we ourselves receive the communicated good, than when it is received by others, we being obliged, in reason, to be grateful in both cases. He, who *kindly* uses others, deserves *kind usage* from all, and, consequently, from us, whether we have been sharers in his kindness, or not. Whereas he, who is only kind to himself, does not lay any obligation upon others to be kind to him, upon that account. The case is the same in *publick rewards*, which are no other than *publick gratitude*. He, who has been beneficial to the *commonwealth*, deserves a grateful return of *kindness* from the publick, which, in other words, we call *reward*; whereas he, who has only been kind to himself, cannot, in reason, have any title to it. Again,

All punishment is the produce of *resentment*, that is, it is returning to a person that *evil*, which he has unkindly and unreasonably communicated to others; so that where there is no evil *communicated*, nor *intended* to be communicated, there is no foundation for resentment, or punishment. Whether we ourselves, or others, have suffered that evil, it alters not the case, any otherwise than as the resentment rises *higher*, and grows *stronger*, when we suffer in our own persons, than when the communicated evil is suffered by others; the *ground* and *reason* of resentment, and, consequently, of punishment being the same in both cases. He, who uses another *ill*, deserves *ill usage* from all, and, consequently, from us, whether we have been



been sufferers by him, or not. Whereas he, who has only injured himself, does not hereby render himself the proper object of resentment to others, upon that account. The case is the same in *publick punishment*, which is no other than the produce of *publick resentment*; he, who has been *injurious* to the commonwealth, deserves publick *correction*; whereas he, who has only been hurtful to himself, cannot, I think, deserve ill usage from the publick, upon that account. Upon the whole, it appears plain to me, tho' perhaps it may appear otherwise to others, that tho' all *virtue* is, in reason, *approvable*; yet all is not, in reason, *rewardable*. And tho' all *vice* is, in reason, *condemnable*; yet all is not, in reason, *punishable*. And as benevolent virtue or a doing good to others, and, in some instances, to deny ourselves pleasure, or to suffer pain, for their sakes, without any view of advantage to ourselves, either present, or future, is a proper foundation for *reward*; so, I think, it is founded in *reason*, or it is an action worthy of a *rational being*. As thus, supposing one man denies himself the enjoyment of a low degree of pleasure, or chuses to undergo a low degree of pain, for a very short space of time, thereby to remove from another a violent fit of the *gout*, or *stone*, or the like, without any view of pleasure or advantage to himself, either in this world, or in the next; in this case, I think, it would be not only a *kind* and *generous*, but also a *reasonable action*; because it appears to me, that the *end* is worthy of the *means* by which it is obtained. And if any farther enquiry should be made, Wherein the reasonableness of such an action lies? the answer is, That the action bespeaks or shews itself to be so; and that, in the nature of the thing, it does not admit of being shewn to be so any other way. And if, in the case above, the action is *reasonable*; then, there may be other cases in which the



chusing to undergo *greater self-denial*, or *greater or more durable pain*, in order to promote the good of others, without any view of advantage to one's self, either present, or future, may be *reasonable* also; tho' I grant that *benevolence* may be carried to an *extream*, and thereby become *unreasonable*. As when a man chuses to undergo great and durable pains himself, merely to procure a very low degree of short-lived pleasure to another. I do not here take upon me to point out the *bounds* of reasonable and unreasonable benevolence; but all that I observe is, that *benevolent actions* appear to be *reasonable*, tho' there are cases in which, when it is carried to an *extream*, they appear to be *otherwise*. And as benevolent virtue is founded in reason; so it is likewise *practicable* to a rational being; that is, such a being, when an opportunity offers of doing good to another, is capable of doing it, purely for that other's sake, without any view of pleasure or advantage to himself. I say, he is capable of acting such a part; because the good of another is a *proper motive* or reason of action to a rational being. And this, I think, is the case of *men*, who are not only capable, but do, I think, even the most selfish of them, in some instances, pursue the good of others, without any regard to their own good, whether present, or future. And tho', in such instances, pleasure will *attend* benevolent actions; yet that pleasure is only the result of, but not the motive to, or the ground and reason of those actions. The motive to and the consequence of an action are as *distinct* and *different*, as two things can be; and the want of distinguishing betwixt these seems to be the foundation of men's *errors*, in the present case. One man by an action intends to do *good* to another, and, if the action has that effect, it will give *pleasure* to the agent; but, if it has a  
contrary

contrary effect, and does *harm* to that other, then, it will give *pain* to the agent. Here we see that the effect and result of the action are different, tho' the motive to action is the same. And if it should be urged, that as pleasure resulted to the agent, in the former case; therefore, *pleasure* was the *motive* to action; then, it may, with equal reason, be urged on the other side, that as *pain* resulted from the action to the agent, in the latter case; therefore, *pain* was the *motive* to that action. I say, the reasoning is equally as just, in one case, as in the other; tho', the truth is, it was neither pleasure, nor pain, to the agent, but *good to another*, which was the motive to action in both cases. And as man is capable of doing good to another, purely for that other's sake; so, surely, such *benevolent virtue* is not *too high, too exalted* for our great Creator. I shall not enquire, What is the *foundation* of pleasure to God? for if, as is supposed, it results from his *doing good*, it will not follow that *selfishness* is the principle of action in him, when he does so. The *reasonableness* of an act is certainly a *proper motive* to action to a rational being; and the question arising from hence is, whether the reasonableness of doing good to another arises from the *action itself*, considered as *doing good to another*, abstractedly from the effect it has upon the *agent*, in giving him pleasure? or whether it arises from the *pleasure* which accrues to the *agent*, considered abstractedly from the good which is done to the other thereby? If the former be the case, then, to do good to another, for that other's sake, under proper circumstances, is a *proper motive* to action to every rational being; and, therefore, it is so to the most rational being, even the *God and Father* of us all. But if the latter be the case, *viz.* that the reasonableness of doing good to another arises from the pleasure, which accrues to the *agent* thereby; then, it will follow that, if doing

*harm* to another will produce that pleasure, doing harm to another is a *reasonable action*. And, from hence, will arise another question, *viz.* If the reasonableness of an action arises from the pleasure, which accrues to the agent thereby ; then, how comes the *doing good*, rather than *harm* to another, to be the ground and foundation of *pleasure* to God ? If it should be said, that there is not any thing in nature which disposes God to take pleasure in doing one, rather than the other ; and that it depends upon his arbitrary will and pleasure. Then, I say, that all his creatures are in a very *unsafe* condition, because tho' he may take pleasure in doing them good *to-day*, yet he may take the like pleasure in doing them harm *to-morrow* ; which is a very *uncomfortable* consideration, and, therefore, I hope, it is not the *truth* of the case. But if it should be said, that there is a *real difference* in the actions themselves, antecedent to any *effect* they may have upon the agent, which is the truth of the case, and that God takes pleasure in doing good, rather than in doing harm, because the former is a *valuable, generous, and rational action* ; whereas the latter is *base, mean, and unreasonable*, and, therefore, cannot be the *ground* of pleasure to him. Then, I say, that the *valuableness, goodness, and reasonableness* of an action is a *proper motive* to a rational being to perform that action, as well as a proper foundation for the *pleasure* which results from it. And that, when God does good to others, it is *benevolence*, and not selfishness, which is the spring or principle of action in him ; it is the *goodness* of the action, which is the *motive* to his doing good, as well as the foundation of that *pleasure*, which accrues to him in so doing. I will conclude this argument with observing to my reader, that to consider *selfishness*, as the sole principle of action in God, is paying but a *mean compliment* to the great Author of the Universe.

TRACT

# T R A C T XXXIV.

## SOME SHORT

## R E F L E C T I O N S

On the Grounds and Extent of *Authority* and *Liberty*, with Respect to *Civil Government*: Wherein the Authority of Civil Governours, in Matters of Religion, is particularly considered. Occasioned by Dr. Rogers's *Vindication* of the *Civil Establishment* of Religion.

**B**EFORE I proceed to what I propose, I think it proper to premise two or three things, with respect to the grounds and foundation of argument. As, *first*, that good and evil, right and wrong, truth and error, arise from, and are founded in the nature of things, and, consequently, are what they are, *viz.* good and evil, right and wrong, truth and error, antecedent to, and independent of the opinion or determination of any person, or persons, concerning them. And, therefore, in reason, the opinion or determination of any man, or body of men, ought not to be admitted, as a foundation for argument, with respect to them. Again,

*Secondly*, In reason, no principle, no proposition, or action, ought to be chargeable with any consequences, but what are the natural result or produce of such principle, proposition, or action. And, therefore, if unnatural consequences are at any time presumed to attend any principle, proposition, or action, and if arguments are founded upon such presumptive consequences, and conclusions are drawn, tho' never so justly,



*harm* to another will produce that pleasure, doing harm to another is a *reasonable action*. And, from hence, will arise another question, *viz.* If the reasonableness of an action arises from the pleasure, which accrues to the agent thereby ; then, how comes the *doing good*, rather than *harm* to another, to be the ground and foundation of *pleasure* to God ? If it should be said, that there is not any thing in nature which disposes God to take pleasure in doing one, rather than the other ; and that it depends upon his arbitrary will and pleasure. Then, I say, that all his creatures are in a very *unsafe* condition, because tho' he may take pleasure in doing them good *to-day*, yet he may take the like pleasure in doing them harm *to-morrow* ; which is a very *uncomfortable* consideration, and, therefore, I hope, it is not the *truth* of the case. But if it should be said, that there is a *real difference* in the actions themselves, antecedent to any *effect* they may have upon the agent, which is the truth of the case, and that God takes pleasure in doing good, rather than in doing harm, because the former is a *valuable, generous, and rational action* ; whereas the latter is *base, mean, and unreasonable*, and, therefore, cannot be the ground of pleasure to him. Then, I say, that the *valuableness, goodness, and reasonableness* of an action is a *proper motive* to a rational being to perform that action, as well as a proper foundation for the *pleasure* which results from it. And that, when God does good to others, it is *benevolence*, and not selfishness, which is the spring or principle of action in him ; it is the *goodness* of the action, which is the *motive* to his doing good, as well as the foundation of that *pleasure*, which accrues to him in so doing. I will conclude this argument with observing to my reader, that to consider *selfishness*, as the sole principle of action in God, is paying but a *mean compliment* to the great Author of the Universe.

TRACT

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## SOME SHORT

## REFLECTIONS

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ly, this is fallacious, and, in reason, ought not to be admitted. As thus : Supposing I was persuaded of the truth of this proposition, *viz.* that bleeding, in all cases, is very injurious to the health and the constitutions of men ; and this induced me to declare to others that proposition in the most publick manner ; and likewise to declare the grounds and reasons upon which I assented to it, and which, I judged, were evidences from which the truth of that proposition would most manifestly appear ; and if, in such a case, any man should presume that breaking the publick peace and disorder in society would be the consequence of such a publication, this consequence would be unnatural, and, therefore, in reason, ought not to be admitted ; as a foundation for argument ; because that publication has no natural tendency to produce it. It is not enough to say in this case, that, in *some instances*, breaking the publick peace and disorder in society have attended men's publishing their opinions freely, as aforesaid ; because these are not the natural produce of such a *publication*, but of *private interest*, *misguided zeal*, and the like ; and of the turbulent and disorderly *passions* of men, which are sometimes raised by the most inoffensive and virtuous actions. Christ published his most benevolent and peaceful gospel to the world ; this gave occasion for alarming the turbulent passions of men, and much disorder followed upon it. But, then, that disorder cannot, in reason, be charged upon the publication of the gospel, because it had no natural tendency to produce such consequences, but the contrary. And, therefore, no argument ought, in reason, to be admitted, which is founded upon such unnatural consequences. Again,

*Thirdly,*

Thirdly, In all points of *moral* consideration, there must be some evident principle of reason to be the ground and foundation of all argumentation on such subjects; or, at least, in those cases where there may be some things *presumed* and *supposed*, there must be a high degree of probability to justify and warrant such *presumptions* and *suppositions*. And, therefore, where such probability is wanting, presumptions and suppositions ought not, in reason, to be admitted, as a foundation for argument. As thus, it is highly reasonable that all men should be good and virtuous. But, then, this will not afford a proper foundation for *presuming* and *supposing* that all men are so, seeing they are not only liable to be otherwise, but likewise experience shews that it is not generally their case. Again, it is highly reasonable, that all those, who have the reins of government in their hands, should make the common good the governing principle of their actions, throughout their administration. But, then, this does not afford a proper foundation for *presuming* and *supposing* that all governours act thus; seeing they are not only liable to act otherwise, but likewise experience shews that many of them have done so. And, therefore, in argument, no reasonings or conclusions ought to be admitted, which are founded upon such groundless principles. And because this is a way of reasoning which is fallacious, and, when it is artfully managed, it may and often does mislead; therefore, I shall give another instance of such groundless *presumptions* and *suppositions*, and thereby more fully illustrate the point I have now under consideration. As thus, man, by his natural frame and composition, is liable to neglect, or abuse, his faculties; and, consequently, all men are liable to be thieves, drunkards, murderers, and the like. But, then, this will not  
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be a proper foundation for *presuming* and *supposing* that all, or that the generality of men, will be thieves, drunkards, murderers, &c. except some positive religious institutions are established to restrain them. Positive religious institutions leave men, as they find them, in this respect; that is, men's natural abilities, their natural tempers and constitutions, their appetites and passions, and whatever are the springs of action in them, and the natural consciousness of the good, or evil, of those actions, are the same, both with and without such positive religious institutions. And, consequently, the *probability* and the *presumption* arising from it lie on the other side of the question; that is, it may fairly be *presumed*, that men would generally be what they are, drunkards, or sober; honest, or dishonest; virtuous, or vicious; both with and without such positive religious institutions. This, I think, is farther evident from experience; men, who are disposed to follow their vicious inclinations, do so, notwithstanding their being under such religious establishments. And, therefore, to *presume* that all others would be alike, or more vicious, were it not for the *establishment* of some religious positive institutions, is a *groundless supposition*, which has nothing in reason, or experience, to support it. Add to this, that positive religious institutions cannot possibly lay men under any reasonable restraint, which natural religion does not lay them under. And, therefore, all argument and reasoning, founded upon such *presumptions* and *suppositions*, ought not, in reason, to be admitted.

These things being premised, I observe that, in order to proceed fairly, and to reason justly and conclusively, upon the subject under consideration, I think, it will be proper to enquire into the *ground* and *reason* upon which *society* and *government*

vernment is founded ; and into the *end* and *purpose* which association is designed to obtain ; and likewise into the *nature* of that *relation* which governors stand in to their people ; and, from hence, I presume, there will unavoidably arise some evident principle of reason, which will be a proper foundation for all farther arguments and reasonings upon the point in hand.

Man's natural frame and composition, and his situation and condition in the world, shew that he is designed and constituted for society, and to be happy in, and with it ; and he is hereby naturally and unavoidably led into it. His natural affections dispose him to society ; his natural ability to convey his ideas to others by speech, the figure and parts of his body, and the endowments of his mind, qualify him for it ; his indigence and dependence upon others, as being unable, in a single capacity, to procure the comforts, or guard against the evils of life, necessitate or force him into society ; and his understanding shews him the fitness and reasonableness of so doing. And as man is thus naturally led into society, or to constitute a publick interest, which is the same thing ; so, in reason, he has a right to claim from society protection from those injuries he is liable to, and which, in his single capacity, he is not qualified to guard against ; and likewise to claim that assistance from society, which his particular necessities call for, and which society is capable of, and, in reason, ought to afford him. I say, every individual, from the *ground* and *reason*, the *end* and *purpose* of association, must, in reason, have a right to claim thus much from society ; and, consequently, the society must, in reason, be obliged to afford such assistance and protection to him. And as each individual is thus naturally interested in society, so each individual comes under *natural*

*natural obligations* to it ; that is to say, each individual is, in reason, obliged to afford his proportion of assistance and protection to society, and thereby to each individual, according to their necessities and dangers, and which in like circumstances he would, in reason, have a right to claim from them. And he is likewise, in reason, obliged not to be injurious or hurtful to society ; and, consequently, not to minister that injury or harm to any individual, which he in like circumstances ought, in reason, to be protected from. And as man is under *natural obligations* to society; as afore-said, so he ought, in reason, to be answerable to society for the discharge of them ; that is, each individual ought, in reason, to be obliged or compelled, if he does not do it voluntarily, to afford his share of assistance and protection to the society ; and to be *restrained* from being injurious and hurtful to it ; or, rather, to be *corrected* and *punished*, whenever he is so. I say, this ought, in reason, to be the case, because it is the very *bond* of society, and is absolutely necessary to answer the *end* and *purpose* of association. For if the society may not, in reason, *force* or *compel* each individual to afford his share of assistance and protection to it ; and if each individual is at *liberty* to hurt and injure each other ; and the society may not, in reason, *correct* and *restrain* him, then, the end of association is *destroyed*, or, rather, the society itself is *lost* and *gone*. And as the society is naturally and necessarily invested with a power to *oblige*, or *restrain*, each individual to do, or avoid, what each individual is, in reason, obliged to do, or avoid, voluntarily, without such compulsion ; so the *authority* of the one, and the *duty* of the other, is *limited* and *determined* by the *ground* and *reason*, the *end* and *purpose* of association. Society is not a matter of choice or election to man ;  
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but he is, by his constitution and condition in life, naturally and necessarily *led* into it; but, then, his duty to the particular society of which he is a member, and the authority it has over him, are to be deduced from the end of association. And as he is, in reason, obliged, from the *ground* of association, not to be injurious or hurtful to the society, but to minister his proportion of assistance and protection to it; so the society, from the *same ground* of association, is invested with authority to oblige him to the one, and restrain him from the other. But, then, that authority can, in reason, be extended only to those things in which the *publick* is *interested*, the *publick good* being the ground and reason, and the end and purpose of such association. So that the society can, in reason, have no *demand* upon any individual, but in those cases in which it is for the *publick good*; nor lay a *restraint* upon any individual, but in those cases wherein the *publick* is *injured*.

As for *original contracts*, I think, the supposition is needless. It is true, societies do consult and come to agreements, with respect to the *person*, or *persons*, in whose hands the *authority*, which resides in them, shall be lodged; and in what *way* and *manner* it shall be exercised; and the like. But, these, I think, are not considered, as original contracts. However, whether there were such contracts, or not, the case is the same; because the authority which arises to, and is lodged in society, must, in reason, be *extended to*, and *bounded by* the *end* and *purpose*, the *ground* and *reason* of association; which, as I observed, is the publick good, *viz.* that each individual may be protected and defended from injury and wrong, and may receive such assistance, as their necessities call from each other. And

As authority in society naturally and necessarily  
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arises from, and is bounded by the ground and reason, the end and purpose of association ; so the nature of the thing requires that it be lodged in the hand of some person, or persons, for the due administration thereof ; because otherwise society would be a *Babel* of confusion, and the end and purpose of association could not be answered. Authority thus exercised, in the making and executing of laws, is in common language called *government* ; and those, who are intrusted with that power, are called *governours*. Whether the authority of the society be primarily lodged in *one* hand, or in *many*, for the exercise thereof, it alters not the case ; because the authority, thus lodged, is the same in *both* cases. Those who are *primarily* invested with the authority, which resides in society, are called *supreme governours* ; because the power of making and executing laws, for the good of society, is primarily lodged in their hands ; and all those who are employed under them, for the due administration thereof, are called *subordinate governours*, because the measure of authority they are invested with is delegated to them from the other.

So that *governours*, namely, those who are *supreme*, are the *trustees*, the *representatives*, and the *guardians* of society. They are the *trustees*, because the society *entrusts* them with the execution of their authority ; that is, with a power to use the strength and wealth of the society for its good, and as its exigences shall require. Again, *Governours* are the *ministers* and *representatives* of society ; because the authority, which they exercise, is the authority which arises from the association, and is thereby lodged in society ; and governours *represent* the society in the exercise of it, just as *subordinate governours* are the *ministers* and *representatives* of the *supreme*, whom they derive their authority

rity from, and *represent* their principals in the exercise of it. Again, Governours are the *guardians* of society, as the *trust*, lodged in their hand, is to be employed for the *publick good*, namely, to *protect* and *defend* every individual from all injuries and harm, whether in their persons, their characters, or properties; to secure to them the possession and enjoyment of every thing they have a right to; and to afford them that assistance which each one's necessitous circumstances may, in reason, call for. And, in these views, I think, the relation, which governours stand in to society, is most fully exemplified. And

As governours are the *trustees* of the society, so they cannot, in reason, employ the strength or wealth of it, to any other purpose than the society's *good*; because, when it is any otherwise employed, it is acting contrary to that *trust*; and, therefore, cannot, in reason, be *justified*. It is true, governours may *err*, and may act for the *hurt* of the society, when they *thought* and *intended* it for their *good*; but, then, tho' their error, and their conduct founded upon it, would be so far *excusable*, as that the actor ought not, in reason, to be *considered*, as injurious to the society, seeing he intended the contrary, provided he took care to be rightly informed, according to his ability and opportunity for such information, and as the circumstances of the case did require; yet, as the society is injured hereby, such conduct is in itself *wrong* and *evil*, tho' the actor is excusable, as aforesaid. And tho' error, in the *circumstances* above-mentioned, would, in reason, be the governour's *excuse*; yet he cannot, in reason, be *excused* and *justified*, when that is *not* his case; because the strength and wealth of the society are a *trust* lodged in his hand, to be employed to answer the *end* and *purpose* of association; and, therefore, he

is, in reason, *obliged* to employ them to answer that purpose. And, if he employs them *otherwise*, it is acting contrary to that trust; especially if the society have *remonstrated* to their governours, and shewed them the *unfitness* of their conduct, or of those laws by which the society is *injured*; or their *strength* or *treasure* wasted. I say, when governours have been thus remonstrated to, their conduct is then so much the more inexcusable; which remonstrance each individual must, in reason, have a right to make, because each individual is a part of that society, who lodged the trust in the governour's hand, and who are interested in the trust which they abuse; and because his weal or woe depends upon the weal or woe of that society, of which he is a part, and whose trust is abused. Surely, nothing can be more extravagantly unreasonable or absurd, than to suppose that a society hath not a right to remonstrate to its governours, when it is abused by them, or to redress its grievances, when they grow so heavy, as to frustrate the end of association. All *trustees* are, in reason, answerable to their principals; and if it were otherwise in the present case, the end and purpose of association would be destroy'd; liberty would not be secured, but would be changed into slavery; and, the publick interest into the personal property of the governour; that is, the publick good, which is the ground of association, would not, upon the present supposition, be secured; the society would be destitute of all authority; it would be absolutely subjected to the will of another; and it would be destitute of all relief; which state is not a state of liberty, but slavery; and the publick strength and treasure would be absolutely at the disposal of the *governour*; which would make it not a *publick interest*, but the governour's *personal property*. All  
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which are exceedingly *unreasonable* and *absurd*; and, therefore, the supposition is groundless. Again,

As governours are the *ministers* and *representative* of society, so their authority cannot possibly be extended *farther*, or rise *higher* than the authority of the society from which it is derived, as the *stream* cannot possibly rise higher than the *fountain* from which it flows. So that if governours, in any instances, either in the *making*, or in the *execution* of *laws*, exercise such power, as is not naturally devolved upon them *from the society*, this is what, in reason, they have no *right* to. This is such power as was not in their *principles*, and, therefore, cannot possibly be derived from them; and, consequently, the exercise of such power cannot, in reason, be *justified*. For as the power or authority of society is *limited* and *bounded* by the ground and reason, the end and purpose of association; so, of necessity, the authority of their *representatives* must be limited and determined by these also. Again,

As governours are the *guardians* of the society; so their authority is *confined* to the *care* of it, and cannot, in reason, be extended farther. *Guardianship*, in the nature of the thing, confines the *guardian* to use and employ the *power* and *wealth* which arises to him from that *guardianship*, in the *use* and *service* of those he is a *guardian* to; and to serve such purposes as his *guardianship* requires. And as governours are the *guardians* of the *happiness* of the society, so their authority is hereby naturally and necessarily *limited* to those things, in which the society is *interested*; and, if they extend their authority farther, they cannot, in reason, be *justified*. The ground and reason, the end and purpose of association, do not require or make it necessary, that the liberty of any individual should be *abridged* or *restrained*, but in those



cases in which the *good* or *hurt* of society is concerned. And, therefore, the *guardians* of society have no right, by virtue of that *guardianship*, to exercise their authority in any other case. Association does not suppose a *restraint* of liberty in *all* cases, but only in *such* cases in which the *publick interest* is concerned. And, therefore, every man has an undoubted natural right to *use* and *enjoy* his liberty in *all* other cases, except he is, in reason, obliged to restrain himself from some other consideration, notwithstanding such association. And if the guardians of the society should *restrain* that liberty, or *punish* men for the use of it, which comes to the same thing, their conduct could not, in reason, be *justified*. And if governours should *think* themselves obliged, in conscience, to restrain men's liberty, as aforesaid; yet such restraint would be unreasonable, and, therefore, unjustifiable. For as a late ingenious \* author very justly observes, "What is one man's right, another man's conscience cannot oblige him upon any just grounds to oppose."

Thus I have taken the view of the *ground* and *reason*, of the *end* and *purpose* of *association*, and of *government*, as arising from, and founded upon it; and likewise of the *nature* of that relation which *governours* stand in to their *people*; presuming this affords some evident principle of reason, which will be a proper foundation for all farther arguments and reasonings upon the point in hand. I have before observed, that no reasonings or conclusions ought to be admitted in argument, which are founded upon *groundless* and *uncertain* principles; and, therefore, I humbly recommend it to be considered, whether those principles, which I have laid down, are well grounded, or not. If they are *not*, let that be shewn; and it will follow that

\* Dr. Roger's Civil Establishment of Religion, Page 141.

no arguments ought to be founded upon, nor conclusions drawn from them; and that, in reason, they ought to be discarded. But if those principles are well grounded; then, I think, they are a proper foundation for argument, and for the determining such questions as the subject affords.

Having thus considered the *ground* and *reason*, the *end* and *purpose* of *association*, and likewise the nature of that relation which governours stand in to their people; I now proceed to build upon this foundation. I shall not enter into every question which the subject may be liable to; but only consider, whether civil governours have any authority in matters of religion; and, if they have, then, how far that authority is extended? And, here it will be proper to fix the notion of the term, *religion*, and shew what idea is annexed to it; for otherwise all arguings and disputings, about *religion*, may be but beating the air. By the term, *religion*, I understand that which is considered, as the ground of divine acceptance, and which does, or is supposed to render men truly acceptable and well-pleasing to God. So that whatever different opinions men may have about the ground of divine acceptance; yet, I think, they agree in this, that whatever is judged to be the foundation of God's favour, that is esteemed and called *religion*. And, consequently, when any action is, or is supposed to render men acceptable, or displeasing, to God, that action is, upon that account, considered, as *religious*, or *irreligious*. This, I think, is the most general sense of the term, *religion*. For tho' some men may confine *religion* to those things, wherein the honour and service of God is directly and immediately concerned, and the like; yet these are considered, as the ground of God's acceptance, and their contraries, as the ground of

his displeasure. So that *religion*, in any limited sense of the word, comes under the general definition I have given of it above. But farther,

An action may come under a twofold consideration, *viz.* *civil* and *religious*; that is, it may be such in which the good, or hurt, of society is concerned; and, in this view, I call it a *civil* action; and it may be such as renders the actor the proper object of *divine* favour, or *displeasure*, or may be judged to do so; and, in this view of it, I call it a *religious* action. If there are any actions in which society is not interested, and which render the actor the proper object of *divine* favour, or displeasure, or are judged to do so, such come only under the denomination of *religious* or *irreligious* actions; and are *not* of *civil* consideration, because society is not interested in, nor concerned with them. If there are any actions in which *society* is interested, and the actor does not thereby become the proper object of *divine* favour, or *displeasure*, or is not judged to do so, such come under the denomination of *civil* actions only; and if there are any actions in which society is not interested, and with which the favour, or displeasure, of *God* is not concerned, or is not judged to be so, such actions are neither *civil*, nor *religious*, but are of an *indifferent* nature, with respect to them both. So that the actions, which come into the present question, are those which are considered, as *religious*, *viz.* such as are of *religious* consideration only, and likewise such as are both *civil* and *religious*. And, with respect to the latter, the question is, Whether the *trustees*, the *representatives*, and the *guardians* of society, have any authority, with respect to such actions, as they are *religious*, and under that consideration. That they have, as those actions are of *civil* consideration, is allowed; because, in that view of them, *society* is interested in them. And, there-

therefore, *governours* have, in reason, a right to oblige each individual to, or restrain him from the performance of such actions, as the good, or hurt, of society is affected by them.

This, then, I think, is the state of the case, *viz.* Whether the *guardians* of society have any right, by virtue of that *guardianship*, to oblige, or restrain, any individual to, or from the performance of any action, upon account of its being subservient to render the actor pleasing, or displeasing, to God; or to his being happy, or unhappy, in another world? Barely to affirm, or deny, in the present case, is not to argue, but to dogmatize. And, therefore, such affirmation, or denial, must be shewn to be founded on some evident principle of reason, to render it of weight in the present question. I think that the *negative* side of this question is the truth of the case; *viz.* that *governours* have *no authority* in matters of religion; that is, they have no right to oblige, or restrain, any individual to, or from the performance of any action, upon account of that action's being subservient to render the actor pleasing, or displeasing, to God; or to his being happy, or unhappy, in another world. My reason is as follows: The *ground* and *reason* of *association* to men is not their relation to, and dependence upon God; but only their relation to, and dependence upon each other. And the ultimate end and purpose of association is not to secure to each individual the *favour* of God, and the happiness of *another world*, but only to procure to each individual those comforts in life, which each, in a single capacity, are not qualified to procure to themselves; and to guard and protect each individual from those evils, which each, in a single capacity, are not qualify'd to secure themselves from. Men do not associate or constitute a publick interest, because each, in  
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a single capacity, are not qualified to obtain *God's* favour and the happiness of *another world*; or that *society*, and, consequently, the *representatives* of it, should give, or secure, those advantages to them: I say, these cannot possibly be the ground and reason, the end and purpose of association, because, with respect to them, association does not alter the case at all. The favour of *God* and the happiness of *another world* are what *society* can neither give, nor secure, nor take away from any individual; and, consequently, these are things which *society*, as such, are not interested in, nor concerned with. Every individual must, in his single capacity, render himself *personally* pleasing to *God*, and thereby be the proper object of his present, or future, favour; for otherwise he cannot possibly obtain it; that is, he must voluntarily chuse to do, and avoid, whatever is necessary to render him acceptable and well-pleasing to his Maker; it being out of the power of any other to do it for him. And, therefore, if *governours* should assume to themselves a power to oblige, or restrain, any individual to do, or avoid, any action, as *religious*, they would hereby destroy the end which they propose to obtain. For as every *religious* action, or omission, must have a *religious* motive to be the ground or reason of it; because otherwise it would not be a *religious* action, or omission; so when *governours* interpose their authority, by compelling, or restraining, as far as that influences, by being the *ground* or *reason* of such action, or omission, so far the *religiousness* of that action, or omission, is destroyed. Again, As the *favour* of *God* and the happiness of *another world* must be by every individual *personally* obtained; so it is what every individual is only *personally* interested in. If any individual is interested in *God's* favour, and entitled to the happiness of *another world*, so-

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*society* is no gainer; and, if the contrary is his case, *society* is no loser hereby. It is true, those actions which render men the objects of God's favour, or displeasure, may be beneficial, or hurtful, to *society*; but, then, the good, or hurt, which *society* receives from such actions, arises from the actions themselves, considered abstractedly from their being pleasing, or displeasing, to God; and they would be equally beneficial, or hurtful, whether they be introductive to the *favour*, or *displeasure*, of God, or not. So that, in this view, those actions are not of *religious*, but of *civil* consideration only.

The sum of the present argument is this, *viz.* *religion* is wholly and only *personal*; that is, every man must render himself *personally* pleasing to God; this being what *society* can neither give, nor secure, nor take away; and it is likewise what *society* is not interested in. If he obtains God's favour, no man is a gainer, but himself; and, if he loses that favour, no one is a sufferer, but himself, thereby; and, consequently, *religion* cannot possibly be the *ground* and *reason* of association, or the *end* and *purpose* to which it is intended to be subservient. And as the authority which resides in *society*, and, consequently, in *governours*, as their *representatives*, does naturally arise from, and is, therefore, extended to, and bounded by, the *ground* and *reason*, the *end* and *purpose* of association; so, from hence, it will unavoidably follow, that *governours* have *no authority* in matters of religion; that is, they have, in reason, no right to oblige, or restrain, any individual to, or from the performance of any action, upon account of that action's being pleasing, or displeasing, to God; because this is such power as was not in their principals, and, therefore, cannot possibly be derived from them.

*Governours*

*Governours*, as I have already observed. are the *trustees*, the *representatives*, and the *guardians* of society. But as *religion* is purely *personal*, and in which society is not interested in any respect, there cannot, therefore, possibly arise any *trust*, to governours from society, upon a *religious* account; that is, governours cannot possibly have a right to govern the understandings and actions of men, with respect to *religion*, upon the account of their being the society's *trustees*. And as the authority which arises to society from the ground and reason, the end and purpose of association, cannot possibly be extended to matters of *religious* consideration; so governours cannot possibly have a right to govern the understandings and actions of men, upon a *religious* account, by virtue of their being the society's *representatives*. And as the favour, or displeasure, of God, and the happiness, or unhappiness, of another world, are what society can neither give, nor secure, nor take away; so governours cannot possibly have a right to interpose in matters of *religion*, by virtue of their being the society's *guardians*. The case, I think, is as plain as any thing can possibly be, And, therefore, if civil governours should at any time interpose in matters of *religion*, by making laws, or executing them, when made, in order to oblige, or restrain, any individual, to, or from the performance of any action, upon a *religious* account; this is manifestly a stretch of power; this is what *governours*, as *governours*, have no right to; and, therefore, cannot, in reason, be justified in. Thus, I think, I have fully shewn that governours, as such, that is, as the *trustees*, the *representatives*, and the *guardians* of society, have no right to interpose in matters of *religion*; that is, they have no right to oblige, or restrain, any individual, to, or from the performance of any action, upon the account of its being the

the ground of *divine* favour, or displeasure. And if governours have no authority in matters of *religion*, when the term, *religion*, is understood in its utmost latitude, as, I think, I have shewn they have not; then, it will follow, that governours can have no authority in matters of *religion*, when the term, *religion*, is understood in any restrained or limited sense. To shew this at large may be thought needless, because it unavoidably follows from what has been before laid down.

But because I am willing to go thro' the question I am now upon, and thereby prevent any exceptions it may be liable to, I will briefly examine the several *particulars* which may be considered, as *religion*; and these, I think, may be ranged under *four* heads, *namely*, *first*, Men's living in the practice of *virtue*, that is, their putting on such a behaviour as is suitable to a rational and manly character, by doing to all others as they would be done by, and by rendering themselves as agreeable, useful, and beneficial to the world, as their condition and circumstances in life renders them capable of. *Secondly*, Men's paying their acknowledgments to God *in society*, which is commonly called *publick divine worship*. *Thirdly*, Men's performing some *external* actions, upon a *religious* account; such as *bowing the body*, &c. and which are usually expressed by these terms, *viz. rites, ceremonies, ordinances, institutions, sacraments*, or the like. *Fourthly*, Men's *assenting*, and *publickly professing* that assent, to certain propositions, which are commonly called *articles of faith*. These are the several things which are either separately, or jointly, considered, as the ground of divine acceptance, and, therefore, are called *religion*. And,

*First*, If *religion* be considered, as consisting in the practice of *virtue*, then, the question will be, What *authority governours* have in *religious* matters?

And



And the answer is, That they have *none at all*. For tho' *religious* actions may be beneficial to *society*, and *irreligious* actions may be hurtful to it; yet the *good*, or *hurt*, which *society* sustains by them, arises from the actions themselves, considered abstractedly from the *religiousness*, or *irreligiousness*, of those actions. And, therefore, tho' governours have authority to oblige, or restrain, men, with respect to such action; yet it is not, upon account of the *religiousness*, or *irreligiousness*, of those actions, but only on account of their being *civil* actions; that is, upon account of the actions themselves being *beneficial*, or *hurtful*, to *society*, as aforesaid. So that *religion* does not come into the case at all. Again,

*Secodnly*, If *religion* be considered, as consisting in men's paying *their acknowledgments* to God in *society*; then the question will be. What authority *civil governours* have in matters of *religion*? And the answer will be, That they have *none at all*. I shall not enter into the question, Whether men are, in reason, obliged *publickly* to pay their acknowledgments to God? it being sufficient to observe, that the generality of men think they are so. And as men, who are thus persuaded, must either come to some agreement among themselves, with respect to the *time*, *the place*, and the *form* or *mode of worship*, and the *person* to minister therein, or else accept of what is provided for them; I say, one or other of these must be the case; for otherwise *publick worship* cannot take place. Therefore, I think, that it cannot in reason, be considered, as a *hurt* or *injury*, but a *kindness* and a *benefit* to *society*, for governours to make a provision in these respects, that so each individual may have the opportunity of paying his *publick acknowledgments* to God, which the generality of men think it is their duty to do. But, then, there is nothing *authoritative* in all this, supposing men are left perfectly

freely at liberty, which, in reason, every man ought to be. For as worshipping God is a matter purely *personal*, with which society is not concerned, or interested in; that is, society is not *benefited*, nor *damaged*, by men's worshipping, or not worshipping; by their worshipping in this or that place, at this or that time, by this or that form, &c. so governours cannot possibly have a right to oblige, or restrain, men in *these respects*; because it is not men's relation to, and dependence upon God, or the good, or evil, they may receive from him, but only their relation to, and dependence upon, and the good, or evil, they may receive from *each other*, which is the ground and reason, and the end and purpose of association. And, therefore, tho' governours may so far interpose, as to appoint a *time* for publick worship, a *place* to perform it in, a *form* or *mode* of worship, and a *person* to minister in divine service, these being not of *religious*, but of *civil* consideration only, as the favour of God, and the happiness of *another world*, do not at all arise from, or depend upon them; and as they are subservient only to the present *conveniency* of *society*, in their paying their *publick* acknowledgments to God, and to render their minds easy and quiet in so doing; I say, tho' governours may make a provision for *publick* worship, as aforesaid; yet it will not follow, that they have a right to *oblige*, or *restrain*, any individual in these respects. For as man's obligations to God are purely *personal*, and center in *himself*, society not coming under any obligations thereby; and as he is only answerable to God for the discharge of them, society not being rewardable, or punishable, upon his account; so society cannot, in reason, have a right of dominion over him in these respects, but ought to leave him under the most universal and unlimited toleration. And as the  
end

end and design of a stated *time* and *place* for public worship, stated *forms* and *modes* of worship, and a stated *ministry*, is, that each individual member of society may have the opportunity of paying his public acknowledgments to God, and may have ease and quiet of mind in so doing; so the nature of the thing requires, that *public satisfaction* should be solely aimed at, with respect to them; that is, after a due regard is had to the natural and moral character of Almighty God, which public worship is designed to express, and to preserve a just sense of it in the minds of men, such *time* and *place*, such *modes* of worship, and such a *ministry* should, in reason, be provided for society, as will suit the more general circumstances and the more general opinions of mankind in these respects. Every governour, in the act of worship, is but an individual, and stands upon the same foot in that respect with every other individual. And, therefore, as provision for public worship by a stated time, place, mode, and ministry, is not for *governours*, considered as *governours*, but for *society*, and for governours, only as *parts* and *members* of it; so in reason, it is not the *particular* circumstances or *opinions* of governours, but the more general circumstances and opinions of *mankind*, which should be the ground and reason, and the rule and measure of action, with respect to them. For as *public worship* ought, in reason, to be provided for all; so, if possible, such, in reason, ought to be used as may be acceptable to every individual, and thereby answer the end and purpose of worship to *them*. If an entertainment were to be made for a body of men, he that provides it is not to consult his *own* particular taste, and make that the rule of action in his provisions; but he is to consider what will suit the more general tastes of those who are to be entertained, and to provide accordingly. Again,

*Thirdly*, If *religion* be considered to consist in the performance of certain *external* actions, such as *bowing the body*, or the like, which actions are usually expressed by those terms, *viz. rites, ceremonies, ordinances, institutions, sacraments*, and the like, the question will be, What authority *civil governours* have in matters of *religion*? And the answer will be as before, *viz. That they have none at all*. For as these are what society are not interested in, so there cannot possibly any authority devolve up on governours from society, with respect to them. If a man *bows*, or *omits bowing*; if he bows toward the *East*, or towards the *West*, if he bows to or before *carved* or a *molton image*; or if he does, or omits doing, any or all of these, or any other ceremonies, society is not benefited nor damaged hereby. And, therefore, governours cannot, in reason, have a right to oblige, or restrain, any individual to, or from the performance of any such action, upon a *religious* account.

If it should be said, that *ceremonies* may be of divine institution; and that, as such, governours have a right to recommend the use of them to their people: I answer, It is allowed they have such a right, it being what every individual has a right to do, as well as governours, provided it be not destructive of the common rights of mankind. Every man has a right to recommend to the world what he thinks will be useful and beneficial to it, or that will render his fellow-creatures acceptable and well-pleasing to God: but, then, here is no *authority* exercised in the case; and as every man has a right to do, as aforesaid, so it is the business of government to guard and secure that right to him. Again,

*Fourthly*, If *religion* be considered to consist in *assenting*, and publicly *professing* that assent, to certain propositions, which are commonly called



*articles of faith*; then the question will be, Whether *civil governours* have any authority in, matters of *religion*? and the answer again will be as before, *viz.* That they have *none at all*. For as assent to, or dissent from, any proposition, or publicly professing, or not professing, such assent, or dissent, is neither beneficial, nor hurtful, to society; so there cannot possibly any authority devolve upon governours from society, with respect to them. If a man assents, or dissents, or if he publicly professes, or does not profess, his assent to, or dissent from, the following propositions, *viz.* *God is prescient*, as the generality of mankind hold, or, *He is not prescient*, as some few hold, such assent, or dissent, or professing, or not professing, such assent, or dissent, does not benefit nor hurt any one individual in society; and, therefore, governours, in reason, have no right to oblige, or restrain, any individual, in these respects.

If it should be said, that some propositions are *important* truths, and that others are *pernicious* errors; and that governours have a right to oblige their people to assent to the former, and dissent from the latter. I answer, That assent to, or dissent from, the truth of a proposition, is the result of that evidence, or the want, or seeming want, of it, upon which each of them is grounded. And assent, or dissent, is purely *personal*, being the result of a man's *own* judgment, and not of *other* men's; so it is what governours can neither give, nor secure, nor take away. And as to the truth and importance of any proposition, these must be proved to every man from such evidences, as are necessary to determine those points, of which every man is constituted a judge for himself, and, with respect to which, governours are not better

better judges than other men. The ground and reason, the end and purpose of association, do not require or make it necessary, that the several members of society should resign their understandings and judgments up to their governours; and that governours should judge, and determine for them, with respect to the truth, or falseness, of any proposition whatever. Besides, governours are by no means qualified for such a work. Truth comes under a *twofold* consideration, *viz.* *first* the truth of things. *Secondly*, a true relation of our opinions concerning them. In the *former* case, truth stands opposed to error, and in the *latter* to falshood. And when one man is constituted a judge of what is *truth*, or *error*, to, or for, any other men, or body of men, so as that such men, or body of men, are obliged to receive for truth, or error, whatever the other puts upon them, as such; then the nature of the thing requires, that every such judge should have a twofold qualification, *viz.* *first*, he must have an *infallible judgment* which cannot err. And, *secondly*, he must be of strict *veracity*, and will not deceive. For if he is defective in either of these, then, he is unqualified for such a work: but governours cannot shew, that they are possessed of those qualifications, more than other men; and, therefore, they are not, in reason, constituted their judges. And if governours would be, in reality, the guardians of *truth*, then, they must protect and defend men in their searches and enquiries after it, and not correct and punish them when they do so. For as the truth of any proposition is known to be such, by the discernment of that evidence upon which the truth of the proposition depends; so is he the greatest friend to truth, who discovers and encourages the discovery and free examination of such

evidence. And tho' this gives error the same advantage as truth, which in this case, I think, it ought, in reason, to have, *viz.* a fair hearing; seeing error assumes the character of truth, and, therefore, is not to be condemned, as error, 'till it is proved to be so upon a fair examination of the case; yet truth is not a sufferer, but a gainer thereby. Because it is by such a free examination of the evidence, that truth is discover'd and known to be such; just as in the case of property, which governours, *as governours*, are the *guardians* of. For when a dispute arises about a *right of property*, then governours, as the *guardians of property*, are not to shut up every court of justice, in which the right of property is used to be tried, and so *bar* and *prevent* all disputes of that kind; for, then, they would not be the *guardians*; but the *destroyers of property*; but they are to encourage and protect each party in making out their claim, by giving them full liberty to produce their evidences, and likewise give them a fair hearing; it being the *evidences* only, and not the *authority* of governours, which, in reason, ought to determine, on which side the right of property lies; so in like manner, if a dispute arises about the *truth* of a proposition, then, governours, as the *guardians of truth*, are not to prohibit men from, or punish them for publishing any proposition, or the evidence they have to support it, and so *bar* all disputes of that kind: for, then, they would not be the *guardians*, but the *destroyers of truth*, by robbing it of every friend; but they are to encourage, and to protect *each party*, in making out their claim to truth; by giving them full liberty to produce their evidences; and likewise to let them have a fair hearing: it being the evidences only, and not the authority of governours, which, in reason ought

ought to determine, on which side of a question the truth lies.

Thus, I have examin'd the several particulars which may be considered, as *religion*, and have shewn, that governours, as *governours*, that is as the *trustees*, the *representatives*, and the *guardians* of society, have no authority, with respect to them. I now proceed to examine what may be urged in favour of such authority, or rather, in favour of persecution, which is the same thing. And,

*First*, It may be urged, that it is reasonable governours should have authority to oblige, or restrain, men in those cases where God is neglected, or dishonoured; because the cause and interest of God and his honour ought to be as near and dear to them, as the cause and interest of society, and therefore, ought to be guarded and defended by them. *I answer*, That governours ought to have a true regard for the honour and service of God is allowed: it being what every individual is obliged to. But it will not follow, from hence, that they have a right to exercise any branch of authority which does not naturally devolve upon them from society. They are to have a regard to the honour and service of God: but, then, they are to manifest that regard, by doing what properly comes within their own province; and not by doing what, in reason, they have no right to. They are to encourage what is beneficial to society, by bestowing their favours on those who do such actions as are beneficial to it. And they are to discourage what is prejudicial to society, by withholding their favours from, or by punishing those who do such actions, as are injurious and hurtful to it. But it will not follow, that they have a right to punish men for those actions,



in which society is not interested; but the contrary; because no such power does naturally arise from the ground and end of association; and therefore, such power cannot be devolved upon governors from society, whose *ministers* and *representatives* they are. But farther, we are to render to all their due; to *Cæsar* the things that are *Cæsar's*, and unto *God* the things that are *God's*. To *Cæsar*, the authority which belongs to *Cæsar*; and to *God*, the authority which belongs to him. Governors are the *representatives* of society; and, therefore, every offence, committed against *society*, they are to correct and restrain. But those offences, which are committed only against *God*, are to be left to the judgment of *God*, who has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, and render to every man according to his works. And, therefore, if *civil governors* should take upon them to give judgment, with respect to these, this would be doing what they have no authority for. It would be judging before the time, and as it were, taking the work out of *God's* hand. Again,

*Secondly*, It may be urged, that the belief of a *God*, a providence, and a judgment to come, is necessary to the happiness of *society*; and that, as these are principles of religion, so it is necessary that governors should oblige each individual to give some publick test of his belief of them; for otherwise there will be no proper foundation for that mutual trust and confidence, which the members of society ought to repose in each other, and without which the affairs and business of society cannot be carried on. I answer, The belief of a *God*, a providence, and a judgment to come, doth not necessarily make men *beneficial* and *useful* to *society*; and a *disbelief* of these doth not necessarily make them *injuriously* and *hurtful* to it; men's relation to, their interest

interest in, their dependance upon, and their obligations to society being exactly the same, whether they believe those points, or not. And as it is not men's relation to, and dependence upon God, but their relation to, and dependence upon *each other*, which is the ground and reason of association; so *governours* cannot possibly have any authority devolved upon them from society, to oblige, or restrain, any individual, in these respects. Besides, assent, or dissent, is not in the *governour's* power to give, secure, or take away; and, therefore, he cannot, in reason, have any authority, with respect to them. As for men's giving some publick *tests* of their belief of the foremention'd points, in order to secure mutual confidence in society, I think, that, which will be most effectual to answer this end, is a right behaviour, or, in other words, a good life. When a man, in the general course of his actions, behaves himself with uprightness and integrity in society; this is a proper foundation for confidence in such a man, that he will act thus in any instance, in which it is necessary that confidence should be reposed in him. But if a man, in the general course of his actions, is unfair and dissingenuous in, and to *society*; then, there is not any profession or declaration which he can make, that will be a proper foundation for confidence in such a man. And, therefore, if he should be required to attend divine service, to subscribe certain articles of faith, and the like, and if he submits to what is thus required of him, tho' this may, and often does, serve as a cloak to cover his evil designs, yet it cannot be a proper foundation for confidence in him; because his general behaviours shews that he is unworthy of it. In short, publick tests suppose men to be honest and sincere, antecedent to the taking of them; for otherwise they are of no affect, and, therefore, they cannot serve to *prove a*

point which must be *supposed* and *allowed*, antecedent to such proof. And as such tests are what honest men do not need, and what dishonest and bad men will not be obliged, or restrained by; so of consequence, they are generally but of little service to society. It must be allowed, that in those cases in which a *Theist* is required to give his interest in God's favour, for a pledge of his sincerity, which is the case of swearing in courts of judicature; there it is highly reasonable, that governours should require from a profess'd *Atheist* a pledge of his sincerity likewise, in something wherein his present interest is concerned. For as this present life is all that he considers himself, as interested in, so he ought to stake some present interest, if such a pledge can be given, in order to render his testimony of equal weight with the testimony of a *Theist*; for otherwise they stand upon an unequal foot; the *Theist*, if he proves false, risques his safety and happiness in *another* world; whereas the *Atheist*, if he gives a false testimonies, upon his own principles, runs no risque at all. It must likewise be allow'd that the belief of a God, a providence, and a judgment to come, may have an influence upon men's behaviour towards each other, and so may be beneficial to society. But, then, tho' this affords a reason for laying before unbelievers all the evidence, upon which the truth of these depends, and by which it may be shewn, in order to work their conviction; yet it cannot afford a reason for excluding them from society, or barring them the advantages which arise from it, or their being useful and serviceable to it; because faith and sociableness, or unbelief and unsociableness, have no necessary relation to, connection with, or dependence upon each other. Again,

*Thirdly and lastly*, It may be urged, that men's being of different opinions, with respect to *religion*,  
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their professing and *publishing* such different opinions, with the grounds and reasons on which they are founded, and their having different *modes* of worship, are such publick *disorders*, or at least, they introduce such disorders in society, as it is the business of governours, who are the *guardians* of *publick peace*, to correct and restrain. I answer, As this argument seems to be offered, in favour of *publick peace*, and thereby is the more likely to mislead; and as it is the golden cup in which the deadly poison of persecution is held forth, to render that evil potion the more acceptable; so I shall be the more particular, in my examination of it. *Publick peace* in society, I think, consists in every individual's quietly possessing and enjoying every comfort, every privilege, every advantage, every liberty, &c. which, in reason, he ought to possess and enjoy, without molestation; and in his not being hurt or injured in his person, his character, or his fortune. And *publick disorder*, as it stands opposed to *publick peace*, I think, must consist in barring any individual from the possession or enjoyment of any comforts, any privilege, any advantage, any liberty, &c. which he ought, in reason, to possess and enjoy; and in the injuring any individual in his person, his character, or his property. And, consequently, the *breach* of *publick peace*, and disorder in society, is greater, or less, in proportion to the greater or less number of persons who are injured by it; and in proportion to the greater or less degree of injury which they sustain. This being the true state of the case, the question will be, Whether men's being of *different religious* opinions, and their *professing* and *publishing* those opinion, together with the grounds and reasons on which they found them, or, whether men's joining in different congregations, and using different modes of worship, be in reality, a *breach* of the *publick peace*, and such a *disorder* in society



society which governours ought, in reason, to have a right to correct and restrain? And the answer; in this case, is as plain and evident, as that two and two, when added together, constitute the number four; *namely*, That men's being of *different religious opinions*, or their *professing* or *publishing* those opinions, together with the grounds on which they are founded, or their using *different modes* of worship, cannot possibly be a *breach* of the *publick peace*, or a *disorder* in society, because not any individual is hereby barred from the possession and enjoyment of any comfort, privilege, advantage, liberty, &c. which in reason, he has a right to possess or enjoy; neither is any individual hurt or injured hereby in his person, his character, or his fortune. And, consequently, governours cannot possibly have any authority devolved upon them from society, to oblige or restrain, any individual, in these respects.

If it should be said, that tho' men's *different opinions* in religion, &c. are not *in themselves* breaches of the *publick peace*, and disorders in society; yet they may, and have been, in many instances, *introductive* to such disorders: and therefore, it is reasonable that governours should be invested with a power to correct and restrain, as well what is *introductive* to *disorders* in society, as to correct and restrain the *disorders themselves*. I answer, If this proves any thing, it proves a great deal too much. For if governours have a right to restrain whatever may *introduce disorders* into society, then, they have a right to put an embargo upon all human affairs; because there is not any transaction in life, but may be *introductive* to such disorders. Numberless are the instances in which men's disputing, about their *personal properties*, have *introduced* disorders into society. And, therefore, if this kind of reasoning be just, then, His Majesty ought, as he is the Guardian of publick peace, to shut up

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*Westminster-Hall*, and all other courts of justice; and thereby bar all disputes of *this* kind, because such disputes have, in some instances, introduced disorders into society. Nothing, surely, was more kindly meant, or which naturally tended to produce better effects, than the publication of the gospel; and yet, in some instances, it introduced not peace, but the sword. It gave occasion for the father to be against the son, and the son against the father; for the mother to be against the daughter, and the daughter to be against the mother; for the mother-in-law to be against the daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law to be against the mother-in-law. But, then, it will by no means follow, that Christ, or his Apostles, ought not to have published the gospel; or that the governours of those times were justifiable, in punishing those who did so: because those disorders, in reason, are only chargeable upon the disorderly persons; and that too for their being disorderly, and not upon any thing else which might accidentally be the occasion of them. And, therefore, if different sentiments and practices, with respect to religion, should at any time be the occasion of breaking the publick peace and disorder in society; then, it is the business and duty of governours not to invade or destroy the common rights of mankind, because that would be to bring those very evils upon the members of society, which government was designed to guard and secure them from; but they are to correct the disorderly persons, and that too for their being disorderly: this being the only proper expedient to prevent disorders in society, and to guard and secure the publick peace. So that when the dispute arose at *Hamburg*, whether the words should be translated *Our Father*, or *Father our* and disorder in society followed upon it; then, it was the business and duty of the civil governours not to bar the people from their natural right

right of judging for themselves, and acting according to their own judgment, with respect to the point in dispute, but to *correct* and *restrain those disorderly persons*, who attempted, by acts of violence, to restrain that liberty in each other, and thereby became *breakers* of the *publick peace*, disorder in society consisting not in men's different sentiments and practices, in matters of religion, but in acts of violence towards each other; and breaking the publick peace and disorder in society always arising, not from a *liberty of dissent*, in matters of religion, but from a restraint of that liberty. And tho' it may, in some cases, be very imprudent for a man to exercise his *natural* right of *publishing* his religious opinions, at a time, and in a place, where the laws of the country prohibit such a *publication*; and where the passions and interest of men might dispose them to put the laws in execution against him; yet this will not justify either the making, or the execution of such laws. For as they are in themselves *unreasonable*, and are the result of such power as governours have no right to; so governours cannot, in reason, be justified in the making or in the execution of them, excepting in those cases in which men's natural rights are concerned, and which governours are obliged to defend.

Thus, I have produced what may be urged, by way of argument in favour of *persecution*, or of governours having authority, in *matters of religion*, which is the same thing; and have shewn that not anything can fairly be concluded from it. I now proceed briefly to shew, how the case will stand, upon the other side of the question; that is, upon admitting that governours have authority to direct and govern the understandings and actions of men in matters of religion. And the case I take to be this, *viz.* If governours have any authority, in  
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matters of *religion*, then, they have *all* authority that is, they are absolute and sole governours of the understandings and actions of men, with respect to *religion*, in *all* cases. For if it be reasonable, that they should have such authority in *one* instance, then, that reason will hold good in *every other* instance; there not being any reason, why governours should have authority in *one* instance; and not in *another*. And, consequently, if there be any reason, for governours having any authority, in matters of *religion*, that reason will hold good and conclude for *all* authority. And, on the other side, if it is unreasonable, that governours should be *sole* and *absolute* governours of the understandings and actions of men, with respect to *religion*, in *all* cases; then, it is equally unreasonable, that they should have such authority in *any* instance whatever; because what concludes against such authority, in *general*, will equally conclude against *every* part and branch of it. And, consequently, if it is reasonable that there should be *toleration* in *some* cases, that reason will equally conclude for the most *absolute* and *unlimited toleration*, with respect to religion. But as religion is purely *personal*, that is, it must be *personally performed*, no one being capable of performing it for another, and it is wholly of *personal* concern, no other being a gainer, or loser thereby, and it is what *every man* is *personally* answerable to God for; therefore, it is most reasonable that *every* man should be at full liberty to judge for himself, and govern his actions by his own judgment, in all matters pertaining thereto. And, as a learned writer\* observes, whose just remark I have already quoted, “What “ is one man’s, and every man’s right, another “ man’s conscience cannot oblige him upon any “ just grounds to oppose.”

\* See Dr. Roger’s Civil Establishment of Religion, Page 141.

Thus,



Thus, I have gone thro' what I proposed, and I think, have fully shewn, that civil governours have *no authority*, in matters of *religion*. However, if those, who are otherwise-minded, should think, that the principles; I reason from, are not well grounded, or that I have not reasoned justly from those principles; let that be shewn, and I shall think myself concerned to consider it. But if they should make their appeal, not to the *understandings*, but to the *passions* of men, by endeavouring to render me contemptible; — such persons, and such reasoning, I shall despise.

To conclude : Truth is what every man has a natural and an undoubted right to. By *truth*, I mean the *truth of things*, or *truth*, as it stands opposed to *error*: and, therefore, every man has a right to conviction, when he is in error; that is, he has a right to hear what others can propose to him, and likewise to propose his own opinions to the world together with the grounds upon which his judgment is determined in their favour. This being the only way to his conviction, because it is the only way by which the weakness, or falseness, of those grounds can be discovered. So that if the advocates for truth and error were at full liberty to make out their claims, by producing their evidences, and by being admitted to a fair hearing truth would then have so much the advantage of error, that I doubt not but it would ride triumph thro' the world.



# TRACT XXXV.

## *Reflections on National Punishments.*

Wherein *two Objections*, urged against what is advanced, in the Author's Discourse on the *Grounds and Extent* of authority and Liberty, with respect to civil *Government*, are examined. In Answer to a private Letter from a Gentleman.

S I R,

I Received your Letter, in which you have sent me your thoughts on my Reflections on the Grounds and Extent of Authority and Liberty, with Respect to civil Government, *viz.* That what I have offered would be *conclusive*, were it not for *two* things which, you conceive, lie as *objections* against what I have advanced. "Namely, *first*, That many texts of scripture, as well as experience, are supposed to tell us, that a *whole society* have suffered afflictions from God, for that a *part* of them have neglected to worship God, or for worshipping him in a manner not agreeable to his will, &c." And you query, Whether it will not follow, that governours have a *right* to oblige, or restrain men, with respect to religious actions, seeing, upon the present supposition, society is manifestly interested therein? To which you add, "*secondly*, That I have allowed, that the liberty of individuals may be *restrained*, in those cases in which the *good*, or *hurt*, of the society is concerned." And you query, as before, Whether it will not follow that governours ought to *abridge* the liberty of individuals, in the *affair of religion*? Upon which I observe, that, I think, the *strength* of your *second*

cond objection arises from what you have *presumed* in your *first*, viz. That God does afflict, or punish, *societies* of men, for the omissions, or actions, of *some individuals*; which actions, or omissions, are *not injurious* to the society any other way, than as they induce *Almighty God* to correct and punish it for their sakes. This, I think, you must mean, or else I cannot perceive, how what *I have allowed* can be urged against me with any *strength*. And, therefore, as both your objections are founded upon the *same principle*; so my shewing the *groundlessness* of that principle will be an *answer* to them both. And, accordingly.

I observe, That the principle your *objections* are founded upon, and upon which the *justness* of your reasoning depends, I think, may reasonably be *disputed*. For as *virtue* and *sin* are only and wholly *personal*; so, in reason, both *rewards* and *punishments*, whether in this life, or another, ought to be only and wholly *personal* also. That is, as one man is not, nor cannot be *vertuous*, or *criminal* by the good or bad actions of another; any otherwise, than as he voluntarily is a sharer in, or a contributor to those actions: so, in reason, he ought not to be *rewarded*, nor *punished*, upon their account. And, therefore, it may justly be questioned, Whether the forementioned *principle* does not reflect *dishonour* upon the *moral character* of our heavenly Father? That is, Whether it be the produce of, or whether it be contrary to *justice*; *wisdom*, and *goodness*, for God to reward and punish men in the *lump*? To reward, or punish, upon account of men's being *good*, or *bad*, and to reward and punish good and bad men *together*, and *alike*; I say the question is, Whether this is a mark of wisdom; justice, and goodness, or of their contraries? For if *wickedness* be the only ground of *divine resentment*, and if *goodness* be the only

only ground of *divine approbation*, as, in reason, they ought to be; then, I think, it may justly be urged, that none but *bad men* ought to feel the effects of the *former*, and none but *good men* to reap the fruits of the *latter*. It may likewise be farther urged, that if *rewards* and *punishments* in this life, are intended to excite men to perform good actions, and to prevent them from their contraries; then, *national rewards*, and *national punishments*, are not adapted to answer such ends, these being dealt forth upon *good* and *bad men* together, and alike: so that the one cannot be an encouragement to *goodness*, nor the other a discouragement to *vice* and *wickedness*. And if this be the *truth* of the case, then, I think, it will follow, that the *principle*, you reason from, is not well grounded.

What you found the forementioned principle upon is, that many *texts of scripture*, as well as *experience*, are supposed to declare it. As for *experience*, I think, that makes no such declaration. And, as to the *scripture*. I think, it may justly be *questioned*; because the Prophet *Ezekiel*, or rather *Almighty God*, by his mouth, assures us, that no such thing can *justly* be charged upon the *divine* conduct. The purport of the *xviii<sup>th</sup>* chap. of *Ezek.* is to shew what is more particularly expressed in ver. 20, viz. *The soul that sinneth*, and that only, *it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and upon him only, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him, and upon him only.* And an appeal is made to the understandings of men, whether such a procedure is not *just* and *equal*; as at ver. 25. *Hear now, O house of Israel, is not my way equal?* &c. Which supposes, that the contrary procedure, in punishing one for the faults of another, and which is appa-



rently the case in *national punishments*, would be *unequal*, that is *unjust*. And the above declaration is made, to vindicate the divine conduct from the charge of *iniquity*, that is, from the charge of punishing the innocent and the guilty together, and alike, which was groundlessly judged to be the case, with respect to the *Babylonish captivity*, and to shew the *groundlessness* of that perverse proverb, which the *Jews* had taken up; viz. *The fathers have eaten sower grapes, and the childrens teeth are set on edge*. And whereas it is said at ver. 3, *As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel*; which seems to imply, that there had been occasion given for the use of it in times past; the meaning is, not that God would take *different* measures in his dealing with his creatures, in this respect, *for the time to come*, then he had taken with them *in times past* and thereby *prevent* giving occasion for the use of that proverb any more in *Israel*: but the meaning is, that as God, by the mouth of his Prophet *fully declared*, what is the *rule of action* to himself in the distribution of punishments, viz. that he will not punish the *innocent* for the faults of the *guilty*, tho' most nearly related to him; and that every one shall suffer for his *own sins only*, and not for the sins of another; I say, after such a declaration, the *Jews* would not have *reason*, as they before *groundlessly* thought they had, for the use of the aforesaid proverb. And that this is the *truth* of the case is manifest from the question asked in the precedent verse, viz. *What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel? &c.* which is as much as to say, that this power was *groundless*, and an *unjust* reflection upon the divine conduct. Thus; again, at ver. 25. *Yet say, the way of the Lord is not equal*. Now, the *iniquity*, which the *Israelites* charged upon the divine conduct

duct, respected only what was *present* and *past*, and not what was to come; and, therefore, God must refer to his *present* and *past* conduct, and not to what he would do in time to come, when he appealed to the house of *Israel*, to judge of the *equity* of his dealings with them. And as *justice* and *equity* which, in the present case, consist in punishing every man for his own sins only, and not for the sins of another, are here declared to be the rule of action to God, with respect to his dealings with the children of *Israel*: so they are most certainly a rule of action to him in every case, and to all people, both yesterday, to day, and for ever. And, therefore, I think, it ought not to be presumed, that the *scriptures* make any declarations contrary thereto.

If it should be urged, that the *oppressions* which the children of *Israel* suffered from the neighbouring nations, and their *captivities*, are, in some instances, at least, considered in the *Bible*. as *punishments* from God for their *idolatry*; in which cases, the *innocent* and the *guilty* suffered alike. I answer, God is sometimes, in the *scriptures*, said to do what his agency is not at all concerned with; and which, strictly speaking, is the produce of the disorderly and ungoverned appetites and passions of men, Thus, *Exod. iv. 21. And the Lord said unto Moses, when thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in thine hand; but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go: compared with chap. viii. ver. 15. But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.* Here we see, that tho' God is said to harden Pharaoh's heart, yet that stubbornness or hardness of heart is charged upon Pharaoh himself, as, in *justice*, it ought to be, For to suppose, that God, by his

his agency, *injected stubbornness* into the heart of *Pharaoh*, and then *punished* him for that stubbornness, is to impute *iniquity* to our *Maker*. And, therefore, when *God* is said to harden *Pharaoh's* heart, this is only a *foretelling*, that *Pharaoh* would harden his own heart; as is evident from the verse I last cited; in which *Pharaoh* is said to harden his heart, *as the Lord had said*. Again 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. *And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them, to say, Go number Israel and Judah*; compared with 1 Chron. xxi 1. *And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel*. Here we see, that the very same thing is ascribed in scripture to *God* and to *Satan* viz. the stirring up a spirit of pride and vainness of mind in *David*: which led him to number *Israel* and *Judah*. But this could not be *God's* act; because if it were, then, he moved *David* to do what is *displeasing* to himself, which is most absurd to suppose. From both these instances, I think, it is plain and evident, that a *thing* or *action* being ascribed to *God*. in scripture is not a proof that it was, in reality, done by him; seeing in the instances before us, he is said to do what his agency was not concerned with. Again, with respect to what is represented in scripture, as *punishments* from *God*; *God* is said to do what he was not, in the least, concerned with; an instance of which is more immediately to the present purpose. Thus, 2 Sam. xii. 11. 12. *Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee, David, out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in, the sight of this sun: for thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun*. Compared with chap. xvi. 21, 22 *And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy fathers concubine*

*concubines, which he hath left to keep the house, and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father; then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong. So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house, and Absalom went in unto his fathers concubines, in the sight of all Israel.* Here we see, that the vilest actions are, in scripture, ascribed to God, and considered, as punishments from him upon others; when he, of all others, was the farthest from being concerned in those actions. And this was manifestly the case, with respect to the captivities of the children of Israel, and the oppressions with which their neighbours oppressed them; these were so far from being, strictly speaking, punishments from God, that, on the contrary, they sprang from the vitiated appetites and passions of men. And, therefore, I think, a mode of speech, used in scripture, ought not, in reason, to be urged, in prejudice, of the moral character of our heavenly Father. Tho' I am sensible, that, with respect to this and many other points, some men are apt to put the case upon a desperate issue; and chuse rather, that God should be justly chargeable with iniquity, and the scripture with contradictions, than that their religious principles, or their unreasonable power, should want a scriptural support. Upon the whole I observe, That if the principle, you reason from, is not well grounded, as, I think, I shewn it is not; then the objections, founded upon it, lose their force. And, consequently, my reasoning, in the tract here referred to, with respect to Civil Government having no Authority, in Matters of Religion, is just and conclusive, for any thing that has yet been shewn to the contrary.

I am, S I R,

Your much obliged humble Servant, &c.

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